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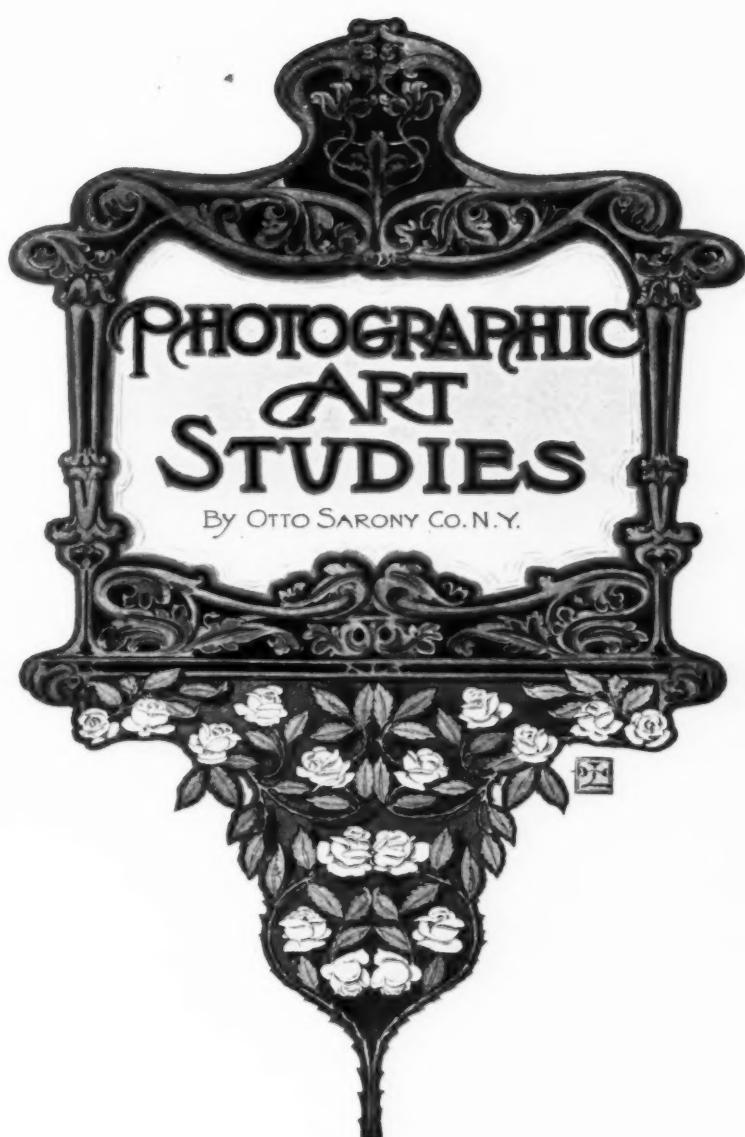
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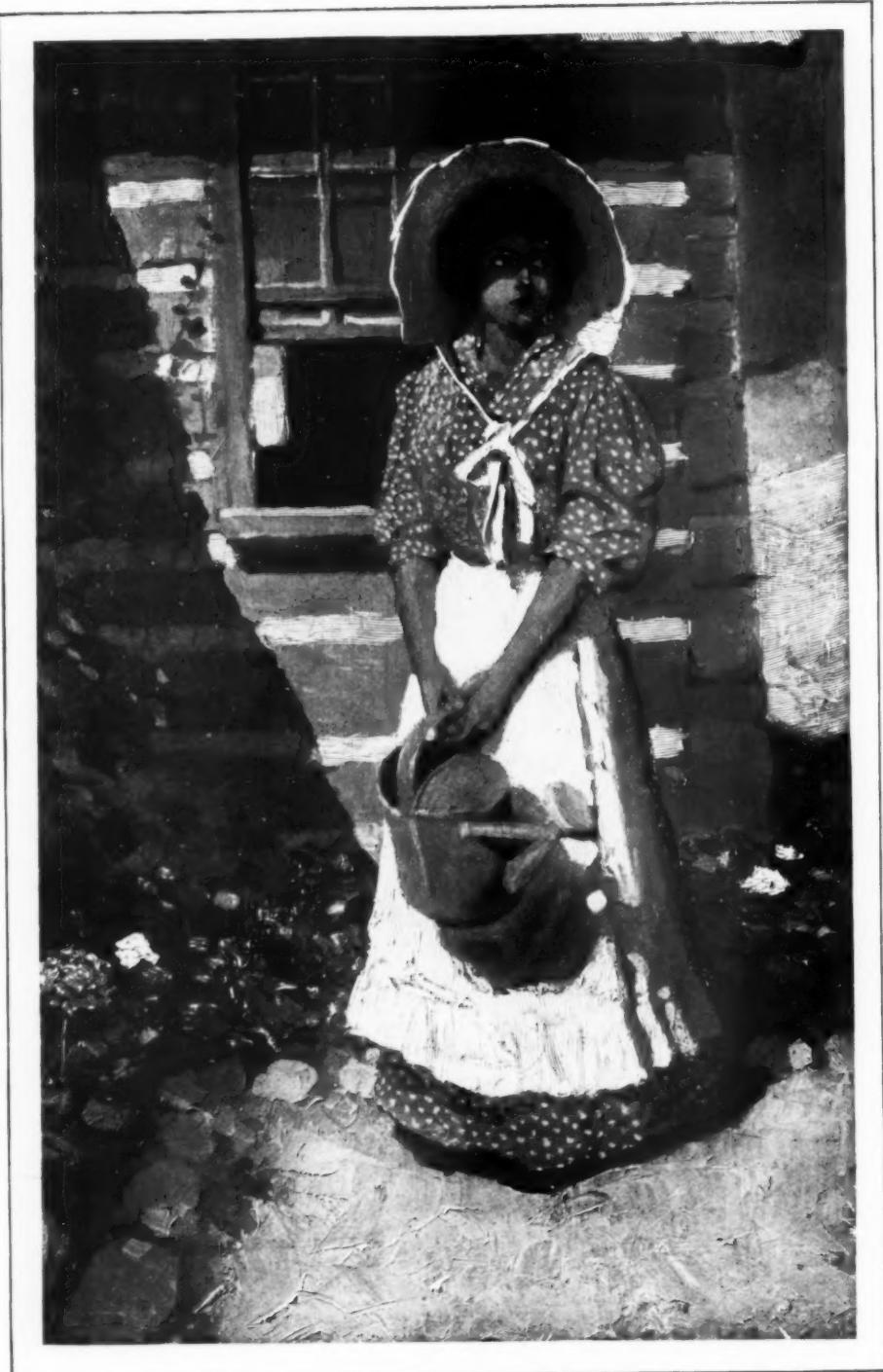
MISS GRACE VAN STUDDIFORD





PHOTOGRAPH BY OTTO SARONY CO., N.Y.

MISS DOROTHY FOLLIS



From a painting by N. C. Wyeth

No wild rose of the mountain could have been purer, fresher, than she

To accompany "The Recoil," page 465

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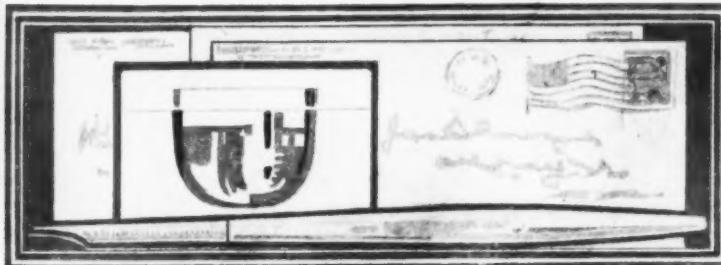
The Menace of the General Delivery

by Donald W. Wilkie

Note. — That there have developed a multitude of abuses of the General Delivery Department of the Postal Service, especially in the larger cities, has long been known to the police, but never before has the real menace that this branch of the Postal Service nourishes been pointed out to the general public. Very recently in Chicago a twain of youthful criminals were taken up by the police and they confessed to the court that all their operations had been carried on through the General Delivery branch of the Postal Service. Efforts to stamp out the evils that the General Delivery gives rise to have thus far been unavailing, and it would appear that the complete abolition of the branch will sooner or later become necessary. It may be added that consideration of the advisability of this step will be officially enlisted on the part of the Postal Department.



LERT and keen eyed, a grimy little newsboy passed the gantlet of officers of the law, and on reaching the window of the General Delivery Division of the postoffice presented to the clerk a fold of torn and dirty paper. It ordered, in accordance with regulations, that all mail addressed to "Harry Doolin," be delivered to bearer. Therefore, such mail was so delivered. Watchful and open-eyed, the little messenger again successfully passed the blockade of plain-clothes men from detective headquarters, who stood about the corridors and steps of the Postoffice Building. Then, by a round-about route, he made his way to Cafferty's saloon, across the river—a noted "hang-out" for crooks—entered a dingy back room, where he found waiting for him Jimmy McGraw, all 'round yeggman and safe-blower, "wanted" in a dozen different states, otherwise known as "Harry Doolin." The latter slipped a silver coin into the hand of the grinning urchin, scowled, and said:





"Min' yer eye, kid. If y' snitch on me, I'll scounce y' on d' conk."

That was all, but it was enough.

McGraw, fully aware that the police were watching for him, that every outlet from the city was guarded, exercised unusual caution. Lights he shunned as men shun the plague. Only once did he stop, and then, from a greasy envelope—one of three brought to him by the boy—he withdrew a newspaper-clipping. Certain letters were pin pricked and to these alone he gave his attention, for in them lay his message.

"If he meets me where I told 'im, it'll be twenty century per, an' that's a fair night's job," he murmured to himself.

On reaching the wholesale section of the city, he skulked less, using now the open streets. In the railway-yards he found no difficulty in swinging aboard the outgoing freight he had planned to take, and within seventy minutes, he stood close to the spider-leg props of the Gary Junction watering-tank, watching the freight slide away in the distance.

Thirty minutes more and Jimmy McGraw, much wanted cracksman, and his pal, "Red" Fay, approached on stolen horses the little town of Millville, close to the state-line. Their mounts were fresh and there was time in plenty.

Next day's rising sun found these two knights of the electric-drill and flash-lantern safely stowed in a through freight bound for the South; and with them some fifteen hundred dollars in cash and an equal amount in stamps. And the little town of Millville was vastly excited. Also were the police of a large city farther north.

"Bum haul, eh?" remarked McGraw, his voice almost drowned by the rumble of the car, "an' we wouldn't 'a' had dat keester full of stickers 'ft hadn't a-bin fer d' Gen'ral Deliv'r'y," he added as he kicked at the sack full of stamps and cash before him on the car floor.

"Mills," said the chief of police, "how could McGraw get word from Fay? The General Delivery was watched and I would rather have lost a finger than let him slip through us again like that. What do you think?"

"Well," replied the inspector, "a change of name would have



Sorting for the General Delivery; Patrons of the General Delivery and a typical General Delivery crowd.



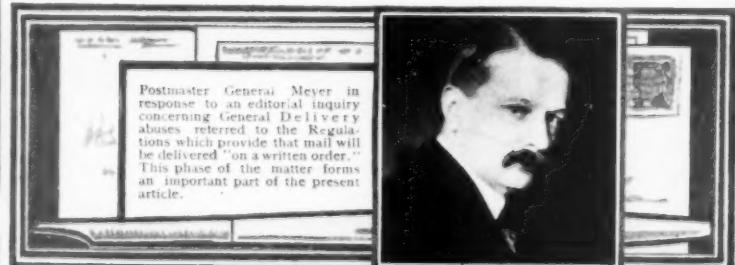


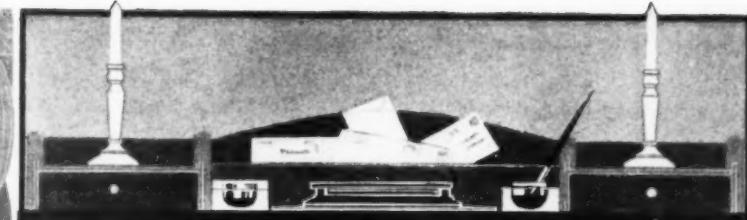
done the trick. They've got no system of identification there. Any one can get mail under an assumed name. The boys on watch there couldn't help themselves, if some one else called for McGraw's mail under a different name and showed an order —you know that."

And thus it was that the General Delivery had again become accessory before the fact in the robbery of the coffers of its own department; once more its honorable and legitimate functions had been put to a criminal use. Nor is such as this the only illegitimate use to which this division is daily being put. Created before the convenience of mail deliveries by postmen had been conceived, this department of the postal service was originally intended as a means of mail delivery to any one who would call in person. But as time went on, the great developments of the postal-system, as enjoyed by the public to-day, were evolved. The General Delivery, however, remained unchanged, with its original and only legitimate purpose being buried deeper and deeper from sight, beneath the thousands of sins that the system now conceals. Keeping pace with, perhaps outstripping the growth of population, these evils have become manifold, and now present a problem apparently without a solution. Eighteen per cent is the estimate of the users of this Division to-day who are legitimate users. The remaining eighty-two per cent are composed of persons in whose lives there is a something they deem it wisest to conceal. Created for the use of clean-lived, upright citizens, it is now maintained largely to the detriment of the country's flotsam, and really to the detriment of the communities which it is supposed to serve.

Breeding immorality; presenting stepping-stones that lead to degradation; a foul pool, in and about which loiters much of the scum of our larger cities; attracting the innocent and unknowing; it is a device that, to-day threatens, in its silent, unseen, malignant, and insidious way, the very foundations of the home and national decency.

It is here that a never ending stream of jostling, crowding humanity comes, pauses, and passes, day and night, month after month, year after year. Here may be found shop-girls and stenographers, bookkeepers and clerks, teamsters and waiters,





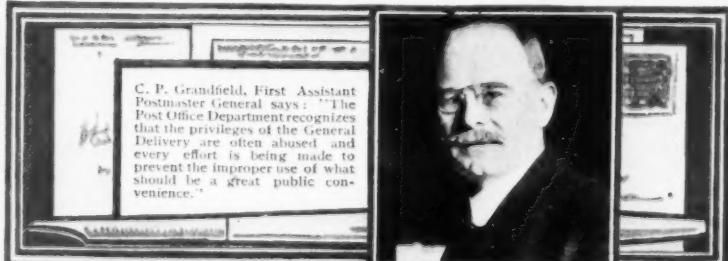
merchants and bankers, state, city, and county officials; all expectant, eighty-two per cent calling for mail they prefer others should not see. And in the human stream one perceives many from the under-world, their bearing telling all too plainly the vicious story of their lives. Here come human vultures, using this as their hunting-ground; mothers and daughters, husbands and sons, secretly corresponding with official aid; criminals and stool-pigeons; all victims of the lure of the General Delivery, all slaves to something dishonorable, something unworthy.

Here one rubs shoulders with the blackmailer, watching for his chance, all too often *her* chance; with the purchaser of human souls; the gambler; watery-eyed clerks—victims of dissipation; even children, innocently paving the way to lives of misery and regret; married women of unstained reputation carrying on a secret correspondence; mothers responsible for the moral character of their homes, coming here in furtherance of deceit and intrigue; Americans and foreigners, side by side, all intent on the delivery of their mail—mail that must be secret.

Among them all are many whose life-stories are such, perhaps, as that of "Country Lettie":

"That's what we call her," volunteered the foreman of the division, with a knowing wink, "an' the name suits her, or rather it did once. She started comin' here thirteen years ago, or more; hasn't missed a day since—but once. She was a country girl for sure, then; sort of edged up here to my window, like a frightened bird. I asked her what her name was and she colored up—"Oh, yell my name, it bane on d' later," she replied. No, sir, she didn't even want to tell me her name. Well, finally, I found out; it was 'Lettie Sykes.' There was nothin' for her, but she called reg'lur after that, just the same; sort of got the habit, like they all do. Only the second day she was with a fellow—you know—one of the kind that hangs 'round here; came every day with 'im. It wasn't long 'fore I begun to notice she'd grown mighty tired-lookin', got all sort of sloppy and discouraged like—that frightened look in her eyes had gone all right; 'nother one in its place.

"One day shortly after she started comin' here with that





fellow, an old man none of us ever remembered havin' seen before, hung 'round all mornin'. Later we found out he was her father. Seems he was up from the country lookin' for her. He thought she was workin' in one of the stores—that's what they all tell 'em at first, you know. She came in, during the afternoon, with that fellow trailin' long behind her. Guess he was afraid she was goin' to get some cash in her hands that he wouldn't know about. When the ol' man saw her, saw what she'd grown to be since she left the farm, he just couldn't do a thing. Stood off there in the lobby and looked 'er over an' then—well, then she saw *him*. Fell on her knees right there on the floor, she did, and pled with him to take her back home. But, no, sir, he'd have nothin' to do with her and turned on his heel and walked out. He hasn't been here since that I know of, either. But she has—comes reg'lar. Here she comes now, it's 'bout time. Stand there and watch through that filin' case. Look at 'er," and the talkative old fellow reached into the proper pigeon-hole.

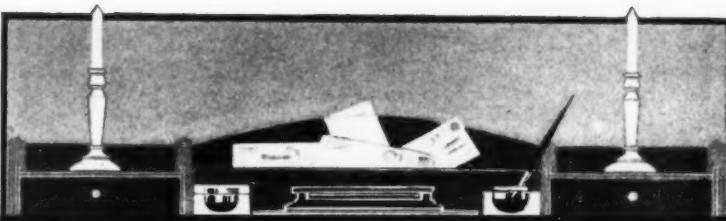
I saw her plainly; there was little enough of the country about her now. With a fling of her skirts, she marched straight up to the window.

"Hi, Bright Eyes? Anything for yours fr'm Niagara Falls? Oh, rats, you know *my* handle; been givin' it t' y' fer a hundred years—Lettie Sykes—sure. Little Lettie, out o' work and lost in a wicked city. Nothin' fer me? Say, that guy must think I live on pickin's. He's gotta come through soon with th' long green; I need it where I live."

And she flounced away, seemingly as care free as a bird; apparently satisfied through and through with what life had given her—a pathetic victim of the vultures who make the General Delivery their hunting grounds.

The one most evil feature of this department of the postal service, the one that has grown like a noxious weed in the garden of good surrounding it, fostered and cared for as it is by the Government, is the use of this division, by supposedly conservative people for furthering clandestine affairs. No aspect of the department's use is more impressive as a proof of the destructive nature of the system; none more noticeable; none more startling





in its dimensions or its results. A fair daily average of letters delivered from any one of the many large branches of this division, in the more important cities, to-day, is two thousand. Of this number seventy per cent. are claimed by women. Inspectors who have been gathering data with reference to the vicious aspects of this secret correspondence, have devoted hours of their time to investigations of these habitual users of the General Delivery. And their reports disclose the amazing fact that sixty per cent. of the women live in homes that are not only good, but in many instances, luxurious, and that, possessing permanent addresses there is no logical need for them to use the General Delivery. Less than four out of ten are identified with the under-world or are wage-earners. Six out of ten are women of excellent reputations in their respective communities.

This means that there are, almost every day, at any of the postoffices of the larger cities, as many as eight hundred and forty women receiving mail, which, if it were such as they did not deem necessary to conceal, might be sent to their respective homes by the usual means of carrier-delivery. But as it is of a character that demands secrecy and hiding, it must be called for and secured in a way in which none but themselves may see it.

Walking rapidly, heavily veiled and with heads bent forward to hide even their profiles, well dressed and therefore observed, they slip in, always alone, almost whisper the name under which they are receiving their mail, and hurriedly beat a nervous retreat from this place—so dangerous to their reputations. It is the only means afforded them to secure their coveted letter; therefore they take advantage of it. But there is also a possibility of exposure and disgrace. Therefore, it is with almost a sigh of relief that they glide beyond the portals of the General Delivery into a locality where decency is not an alien.

Nor is it such as these alone, who use the General Delivery to further their covert operations. Hardly a day passes that officials are not requested by one or more suspecting people to aid them in ascertaining the truth or falsity of suspicions directed against others. Those who call and request the Department to aid them in their domestic troubles, show only too

Anthony Comstock of the Society for the Prevention of Vice says:

"I am not surprised at the statements you make in reference to the white slave trade in connection with the General Delivery Windows of the Post Office. Sometime ago I found a man who waited in the lobby of the N. Y. P. O. to pick up his victims."



plainly, that they realize the value of this Division to those who may wish to put it to a dishonorable use. Were it not for the real meaning of such situations, there might be some humor in one explained to me by an official closely connected with the General Delivery in Chicago.

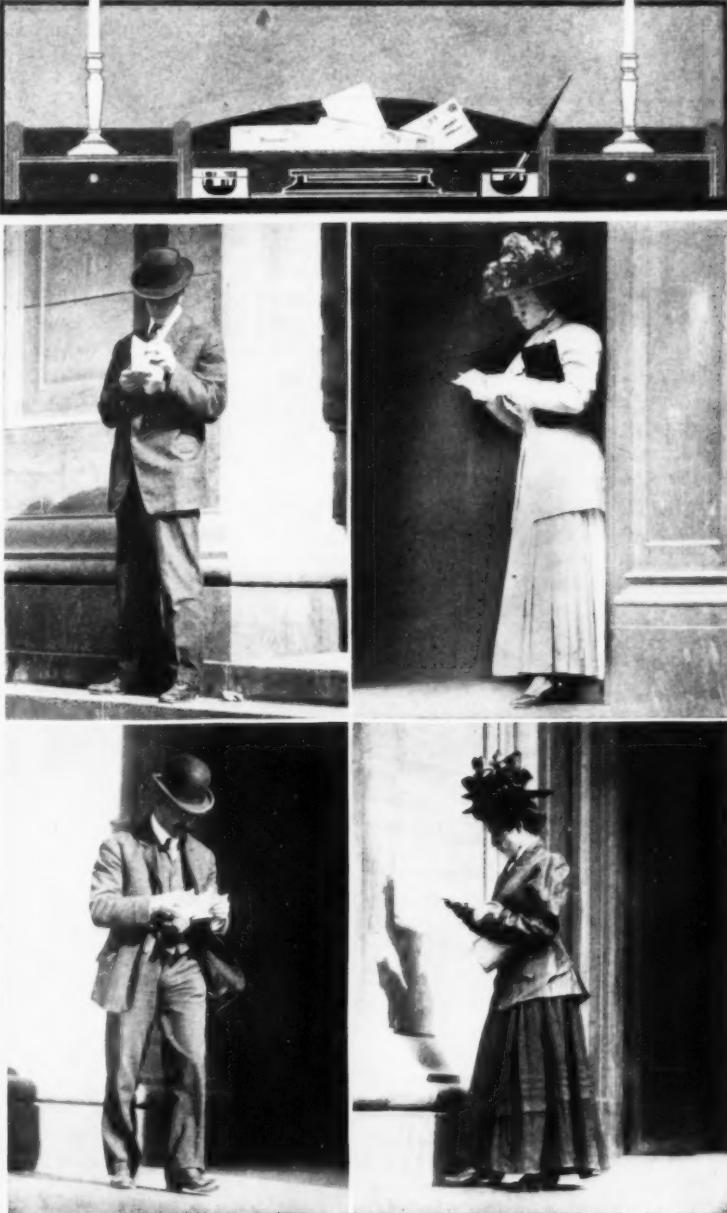
It appears that a young woman of that city, famous throughout the country, at one time, as the bride in an interesting wedding of the rich, had cause to bewail the fact that she suspected her brand new husband of corresponding with certain persons of whom he had made no mention to her. In any event she requested the aid of the officials. At first, it was refused her, for prying into domestic affairs is strictly forbidden by the regulations of the Department, except in cases where those in authority are convinced there is special reason for so doing. But later an agreement was reached, which resulted in a thorough exposé of her husband. Trouble was expected by the officers, but nothing occurred. Some three weeks later the same officials were requested by a young man who presented himself at their offices, to aid him in a like manner, with reference to the suspected correspondence of his wife. He gave his name, and, the better half having been aided, the worser could not justly be refused. The ensuing investigation resulted as disastrously for the wife as had the former for the husband. The *dénouement* of this very French farce of the Postal Service developed when he to whom the young wife had been writing and she with whom the husband had been corresponding, finding themselves in the cold and learning of the cause of their troubles, consoled each other and finally were married.

Police records of every city having over one quarter of a million population and many with far less, disclose numerous blackmailing schemes in which the General Delivery was an absolutely indispensable feature of the transaction. The first problems of blackmailing find easy solution in this division. The greatest difficulty arises, always, in discovering proper subjects for the levying of tribute: men or women in whose lives there is something that they dare not have others know—something that they must conceal.

Much effort, too, is usually demanded before the victims can

D. A. Campbell, Postmaster, Chicago, Illinois says: "In a service so cosmopolitan it is inevitable that some abuse of its privileges will exist, to minimize which unremitting effort is made."

Photo by Moffett Studio, Chicago



All walks of life are represented among callers at the General Delivery.





be forced to a realization of the odds against them and of their utter helplessness. But here, too, the General Delivery acts as the criminal's right hand. There is no better place nor one more admirably suited to the blackmailer during the first steps of his operation. For here, to the General Delivery, the victims come daily. Here they come of their own free will, jeopardizing themselves and their purses, exposing themselves and their characters perhaps unknowingly, but none the less thoroughly.

That they come here for mail; that when they are followed they are found to have homes to which such mail might have been sent, had it been clean mail; that the watching of days, often of weeks and months, shows them to be of enviable reputation and good financial standing; these are sufficient grounds upon which the experienced blackmailer may base his persecutions. Here will be found the best victims—both men and women—carrying on a secret correspondence, the nature of which is such that they will often pay liberally for silence.

In one of our biggest cities of the Middle West, there is now an inspector of police who was, some time ago, a clerk in the General Delivery Division. He was glad to talk to me about the situation and cited many interesting cases, showing how this Division may readily aid the worst type of criminal. One of the most characteristic and illustrative of the stories, I leave for him to tell:

"One day, about three years ago, an elderly woman walked hurriedly up to my window and there I handed her a letter. She was kind of refined lookin' and seemed well to do. This wasn't her first visit, not by a jug-full—nearer her hundredth—but she was always pleasant an' often she left a cigar on the window-shelf when she left. Where'd she get it? Goodness knows; I don't—p'raps from her ol' man's cigar-case. Well, anyway a fellow named Hildreth—I've had something to do with *him* since I got into the police-department—had been hangin' 'round the division for several days an' I'd been kind a-watchin' him, myself, for he was a fox. As this woman passed out—she got mail under the name of Ruth Aldine—I caught sight of Hildreth an' it was plain he was interested.

"Sam Hildreth, you know, is an old timer, a sort of half 'con





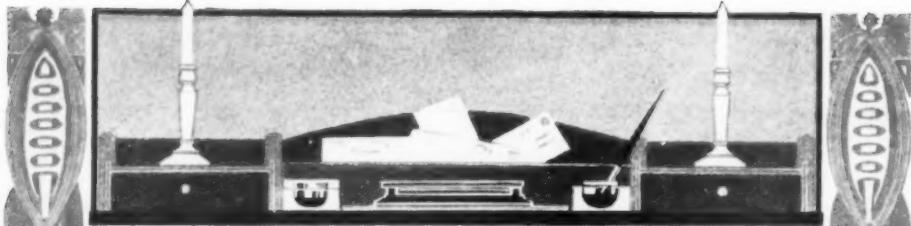
man' and blackmailer, a cunning fellow, smart as a whistle, always seein' the softer spots up ahead and landin' on 'em first, too. Well, as I said, I saw him size up that Miss Aldine as a likely candidate for whatever deviltry it was he was a-hatchin'. It was plain he had some plan in mind and she was a part of it. He disappeared soon after she left. But he was back next day, reg'lar and prompt like, and it just struck me that he seemed more satisfied than usual, jus' like a pitcher would look who'd thrown the third strike over, when the bases were full with two outs and the score a tie.

"This day she called again, same as usual, and when she left, Sam Hildreth went, too. We heard the sequel about two months afterward. That fellow had followed her home the first time, found out she was prominent in her set and he laid for her. One day while she was readin' her letter, on the steps of the buildin' there, he just up and snatched the letter right out of her hand. Did she holler? I should say not. She didn't dare; she was afraid her ol' man would hear about it and Sam, wise rascal as he was, knew it. She didn't make a peep and Sam Hildreth, he read the letter. When he was up before the Judge, for the woman could only stand it just so long, he told just what he had read and they do say it made some sensation.

"Well, it was a long time after the day he snatched it from her, before she came again, but when she did, there was Sam Hildreth, again, back, too, right on the job. He spoke to her in the corridor, outside, that day—took off his hat an' all—he was a pretty good lookin' fellow, dressed up. Court-proceedin's showed she gave him some coin—not a bribe—oh, no, of course not—just sort of because—well, he looked kind of seedy sometimes, and every little bit helps, *somc*.

"Well, for a time, I guess it was pretty soft for Sam. But, you know, it was the last straw that did the trick. I understand he went too far one day, pretty strong, loud talk in the corridor, or something like that. 'Pears she had just had a row at home and wasn't feelin' any too good, and instead of handin' him a bit, as she had been doin', she called a copper. Took her medicine all right, like a little woman who uses the General Delivery, ought to, but *he* went to Joliet. Pickin' hemp now.

John E. Wilkie, Chief of the United States Secret Service says: "The General Delivery affords a convenient channel of communication between criminals and is, therefore, an indirect aid to the success of illegitimate enterprises."

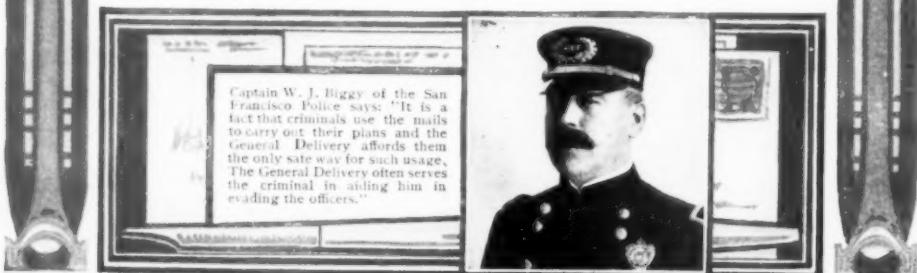


"No, he wasn't so awful bad. Just seems that way, 'cause you all in the public don't hear 'bout these things. There's hundreds we never hear of, just 'cause those doin' the secret correspondence stunt, dasn't holler. An' don't you forget it," and the inspector pushed some buttons that flashed his desires to subordinates.

"An' say," he added later, "Sam Hildreth isn't the only one. We sent up fourteen in this city last year, and all of 'em used the G. D. There isn't a better place for them and they know it. Go over there some day, you'll see plenty of 'em, hangin' 'round', waitin' for a chance—their or worse."

This blackmailing phase, it will be seen, is not directly due to the General Delivery system, as now carried on, for no regulation of that division is responsible for its use in that respect. The medium of correspondence for those desiring secrecy is made possible, however. The use of the division by minors is often the beginning of a course of conduct that inevitably leads to destruction. Young boys and girls come here to carry on a correspondence that, were it known to their parents, would not be permitted. The extent to which this division was being used in Boston by young girls attracted the attention of the post-office authorities, and a number of inspectors were detailed to investigate. Having obtained the home addresses of the school-girls, the parents were notified and in each case, an order, signed by the parent, was filed in the General Delivery. This order read that all mail addressed to—and the name was given—should be delivered, by carrier, at the home. The order, signed by the parent, was, of course, sufficient to cover the mail addressed to the children of the family "care General Delivery," and then a strict watch was maintained over the division for a few weeks. The practice was completely broken up, for the young people had not thought to use fictitious names.

Such children, for the practice has not been stopped elsewhere, offer fruitful soil for the type of male vultures who depend for their existence upon the innocence of such as they. Such creatures make the corridors around the General Delivery their rendezvous, and many are the tales of downfall because of them.

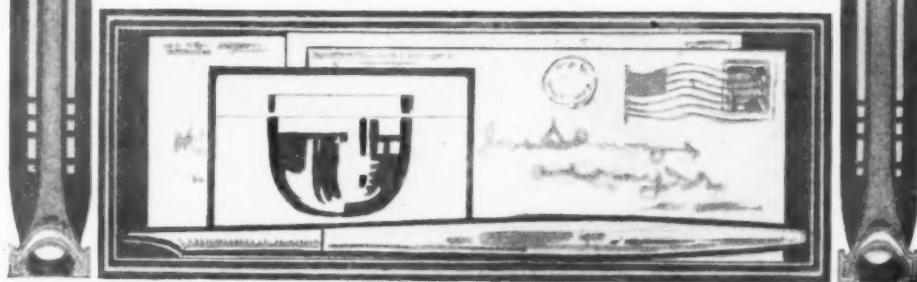


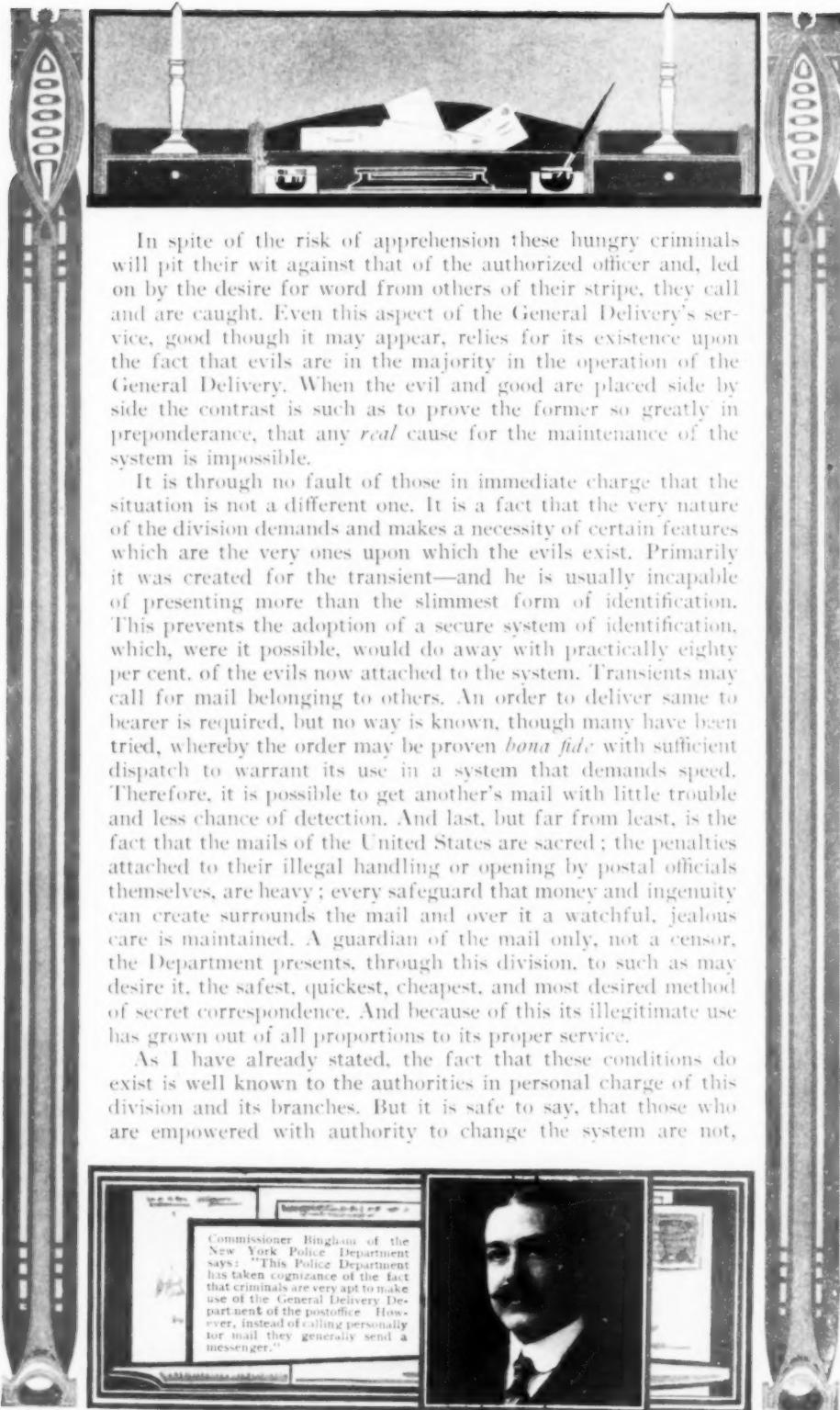


A school-girl, or more often a girl employed in some department-store, comes to the General Delivery for the first time, more, perhaps, in a spirit of mischievousness than otherwise and, once there, is approached and, later succumbing to the flattery and temptations offered by those who have waited for her coming, has left but the story of a ruined life to show for it. Such are the facts. In justice to the division, however, and to those who supervise and direct it, it must be admitted that it is not wholly devoid of advantages, though these, when compared to the evils of its maintenance, might well be considered of slight importance. There is of course that small but legitimate class of travelers, uncertain of their exact whereabouts, to which a General Delivery is an absolute necessity. It may be said, however, with perfect fairness, that *there is no legitimate ground upon which a resident of a city may use the General Delivery.*

There are but two advantages: the first and most important is the old and original necessity for its existence—the fact that there is a class, who look to the Government for a means by which they may receive mail, through the shortest, safest method. And with this class the mail *is* legitimate. This type of user of the system, though forming the minority, pay taxes and are law abiding—for this reason they must receive their due. The second and only other advantage lies in the fact that the General Delivery, because of its very nature, presents the neatest, safest, and surest *trap for the criminal.*

Dominant to a great degree in the make up even of a criminal—for after all he is human—is the desire for society, comradeship, and the eagerness to hear from others of his kind. This characteristic makes possible a valuable use of the window-sections of any large General Delivery. No matter what the crime, nor how degraded the perpetrator, sooner or later his desire for word from friends, his yearning for news—often force of habit—will lead him to this section of the postoffice. There may be a letter there for him; it may contain money that will aid him in further evading officers of the law. He calls for it in person feeling that he may do so with safety and he is caught. Examples of this use are to be found daily in almost any newspaper.





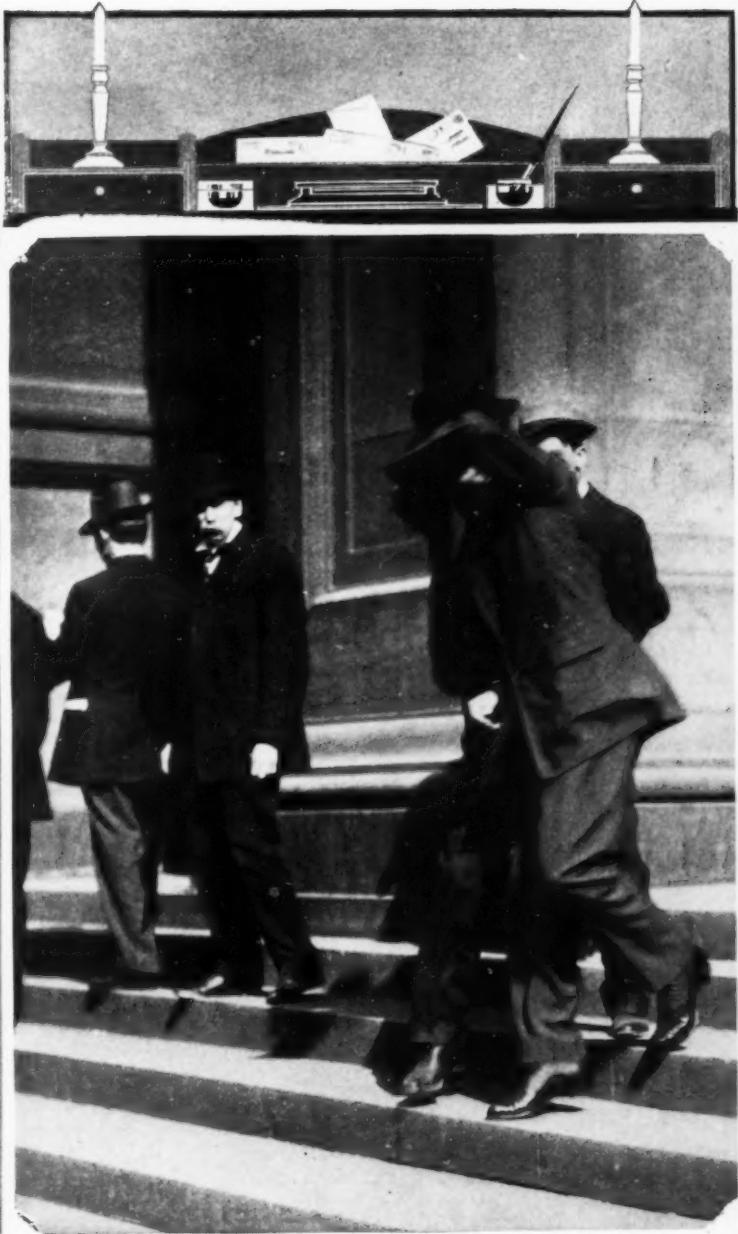
In spite of the risk of apprehension these hungry criminals will pit their wit against that of the authorized officer and, led on by the desire for word from others of their stripe, they call and are caught. Even this aspect of the General Delivery's service, good though it may appear, relies for its existence upon the fact that evils are in the majority in the operation of the General Delivery. When the evil and good are placed side by side the contrast is such as to prove the former so greatly in preponderance, that any *real* cause for the maintenance of the system is impossible.

It is through no fault of those in immediate charge that the situation is not a different one. It is a fact that the very nature of the division demands and makes a necessity of certain features which are the very ones upon which the evils exist. Primarily it was created for the transient—and he is usually incapable of presenting more than the slimmest form of identification. This prevents the adoption of a secure system of identification, which, were it possible, would do away with practically eighty per cent. of the evils now attached to the system. Transients may call for mail belonging to others. An order to deliver same to bearer is required, but no way is known, though many have been tried, whereby the order may be proven *bona fide* with sufficient dispatch to warrant its use in a system that demands speed. Therefore, it is possible to get another's mail with little trouble and less chance of detection. And last, but far from least, is the fact that the mails of the United States are sacred; the penalties attached to their illegal handling or opening by postal officials themselves, are heavy; every safeguard that money and ingenuity can create surrounds the mail and over it a watchful, jealous care is maintained. A guardian of the mail only, not a censor, the Department presents, through this division, to such as may desire it, the safest, quickest, cheapest, and most desired method of secret correspondence. And because of this its illegitimate use has grown out of all proportions to its proper service.

As I have already stated, the fact that these conditions do exist is well known to the authorities in personal charge of this division and its branches. But it is safe to say, that those who are empowered with authority to change the system are not,

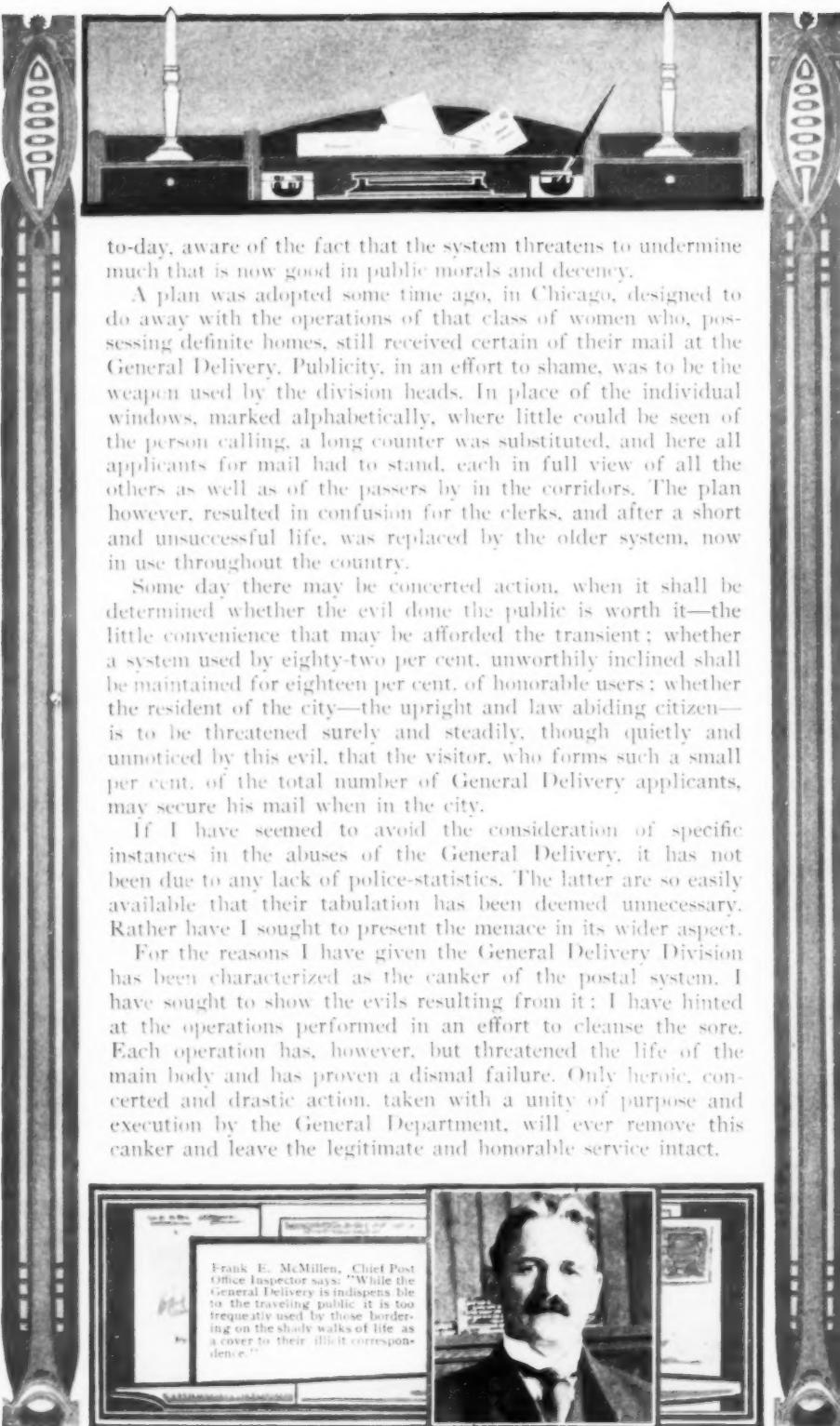
Commissioner Bingham of the New York Police Department says: "This Police Department has taken cognizance of the fact that criminals are very apt to make use of the General Delivery Department of the postoffice. However, instead of calling personally for mail they generally send a messenger."

Photo by Pach Bros., New York



There are patrons of the General Delivery who dislike the Camera.





to-day, aware of the fact that the system threatens to undermine much that is now good in public morals and decency.

A plan was adopted some time ago, in Chicago, designed to do away with the operations of that class of women who, possessing definite homes, still received certain of their mail at the General Delivery. Publicity, in an effort to shame, was to be the weapon used by the division heads. In place of the individual windows, marked alphabetically, where little could be seen of the person calling, a long counter was substituted, and here all applicants for mail had to stand, each in full view of all the others as well as of the passers by in the corridors. The plan however, resulted in confusion for the clerks, and after a short and unsuccessful life, was replaced by the older system, now in use throughout the country.

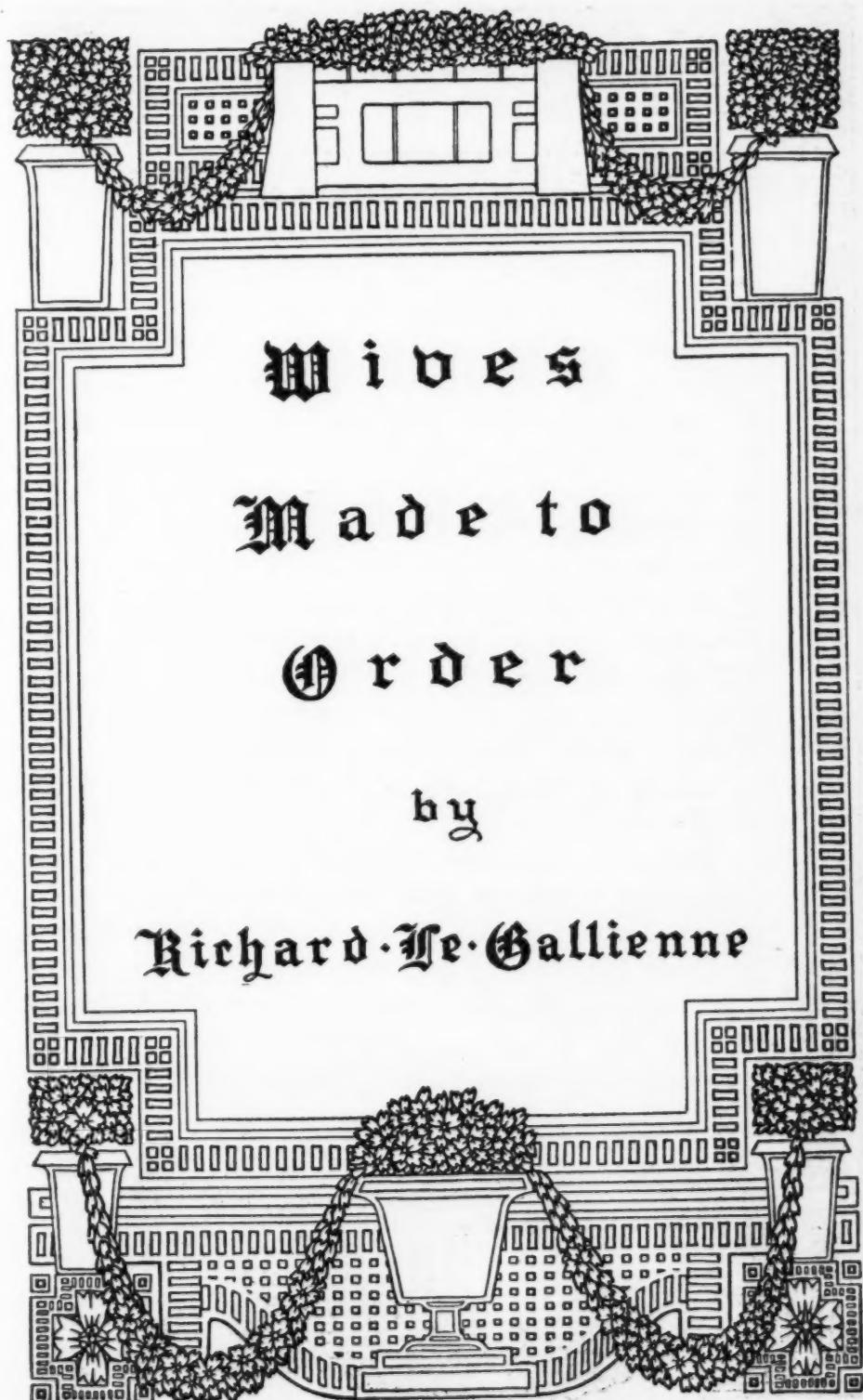
Some day there may be concerted action, when it shall be determined whether the evil done the public is worth it—the little convenience that may be afforded the transient; whether a system used by eighty-two per cent, unworthily inclined shall be maintained for eighteen per cent, of honorable users; whether the resident of the city—the upright and law abiding citizen—is to be threatened surely and steadily, though quietly and unnoticed by this evil, that the visitor, who forms such a small per cent, of the total number of General Delivery applicants, may secure his mail when in the city.

If I have seemed to avoid the consideration of specific instances in the abuses of the General Delivery, it has not been due to any lack of police-statistics. The latter are so easily available that their tabulation has been deemed unnecessary. Rather have I sought to present the menace in its wider aspect.

For the reasons I have given the General Delivery Division has been characterized as the cancer of the postal system. I have sought to show the evils resulting from it; I have hinted at the operations performed in an effort to cleanse the sore. Each operation has, however, but threatened the life of the main body and has proven a dismal failure. Only heroic, concerted and drastic action, taken with a unity of purpose and execution by the General Department, will ever remove this cancer and leave the legitimate and honorable service intact.

Frank E. McMillen, Chief Post Office Inspector says: "While the General Delivery is indispensable to the traveling public, it is too frequently used by those bordering on the shady walks of life as a cover to their illicit correspondence."

Photo Copyright 1908, by Wadsworth



W i b e s
Made to
Order
by

Richard · Le · Gallienne

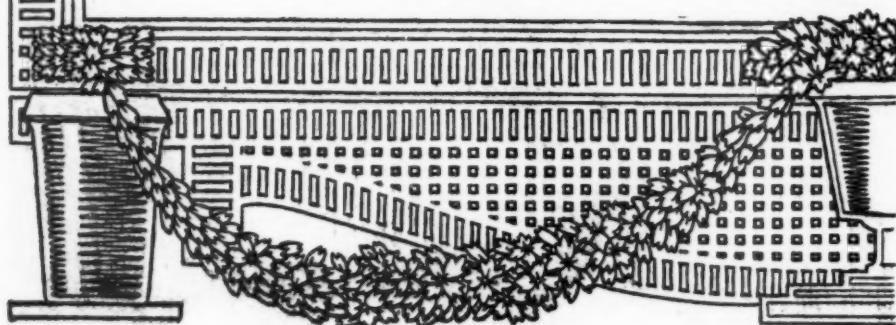
HOW I CAME TO WRITE UPON THIS THEME PERHAPS NEEDS A WORD OF EXPLANATION. I HEARD A MAN, AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE, TALKING ABOUT WOMEN, complaining of them, in fact, complaining of his wife —whom I happened to know was one of the most beautiful women, one of the most unselfish, devoted wives in the world. Devoted to whom? Strange it was to think, as I looked at the man who criticised her, that she was devoted to—him!

It chanced that he knew me for a writer, and turning to me at the end of his tirade, he said: "If you are on the lookout for a subject, here is a suggestion: 'Wives Made to Order.' Some one with a pen should speak up for us husbands and instruct women how best to please us and wherein they fall short and how best to succeed."

I looked at him again, and smiled to myself. A Wife Made to His Order!

"Yes! I will take up your theme," I said, "if only I can persuade a woman with a stronger pen than mine to tell us about 'Husbands Made to Order'—those dream-husbands, born to love and obey, who, I am inclined to think are, after all, quite sorrowfully numerous in America."

Soon after our conversation, I found a woman-writer



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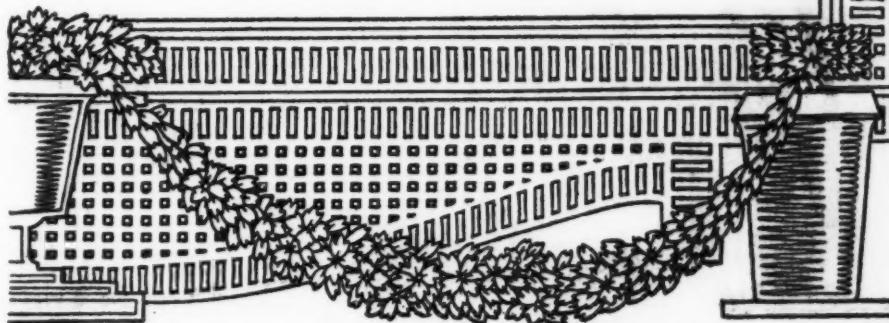
capable and willing to do the pulverization of the husband, and so I have written the following discourse. I trust it will please my masculine friend.

Well!

This is my first thought: Any man should be glad of any woman, and any husband should be grateful for any wife. Men do not deserve women. I have only met one man who deserved a wife—and she married another man.

Man has always taken a sacrilegious, commercial attitude toward the divine. He has always complained of the cost of the rose or disputed the exorbitancy of the nightingale. The beautiful things of wonder that he could not, by any possibility, do or make for himself, he has depreciated, bought at slave prices, and then out of them made a fortune.

Did you ever hear the story of the Pawnbroker and the Rainbow? Briefly, it is the story of most husbands and most wives. There is a Rainbow called a wife. There is a Usurer called a husband. This Usurer sees the Rainbow—sees it with an anciently trained eye for jewels (for most husbands are by nature lovers of hard bargains) and he proposes, or perhaps it were more fitly stated, makes a proposition to the Rainbow—a proposition rather than a proposal—which she is usually glad to accept, for rainbows, poor gauzy things, have a hard time existing—alone there in the sky. They are often

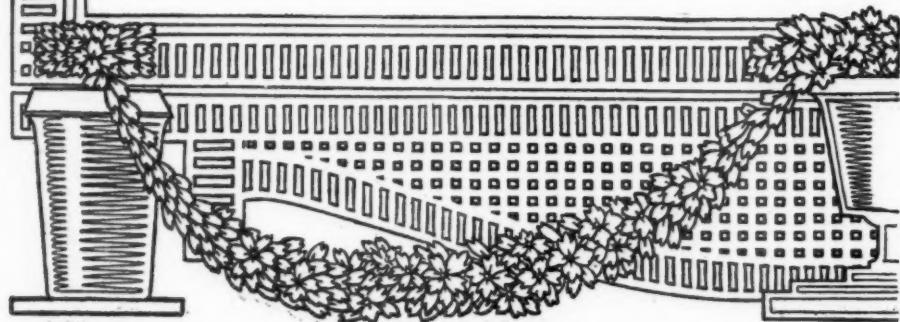


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cold and hungry up in the high heaven and their shimmering draperies cry out for credit-accounts. The Usurer, seeing his opportunity, is not slow to take advantage of this distress of the divine, and offers the Rainbow a comfortable home, all the gowns she fancies, two automobiles—in short, all that entourage, which, being a Rainbow, her soul naturally craves—in exchange for what?—in exchange for that which no money should have the power to buy—in exchange for the beauty and goodness of the Rainbow; and, should the goodness be lacking—what man has ever paid enough even for the beauty of that Rainbow which is Woman!

He may, indeed, sometimes have paid with his life; but what is the life of one man upon the earth to a really beautiful woman?

In spite of the outrageously one-sided bargain which the man has thus driven, he arrogates to himself the right to criticise, command, and reshape this divine visitor of his earthly home according to his tyrannous caprice—to remould her—God-a-mercy! remould the rainbow—in his own foolish image. Has he not bought the immortal with mortal settlements, and shall not the immortal do his bidding! Shall a pearl that hides the moonlit sea in its heart dispute the lordship of the little Amsterdam merchant who owns it? Shall she complain of the setting he gives her? Should she rather not be

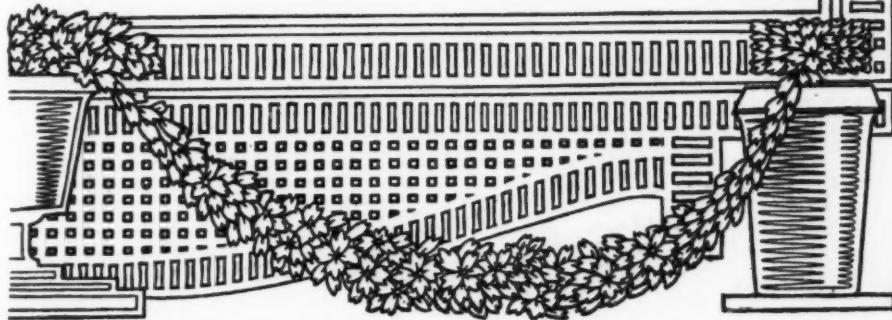


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grateful for any setting at all—she that once rocked deep down in the iridescent twilights of the Pacific?

Thus it is, to change the simile once more, that woman, realizing the conditions of her existence, has become what she is—the Human Chameleon. Long centuries of enforced adaptation to her multicolored, multi-mannered, unprepossessing, rock-bound, masculine, and yet, withal, sheltering surroundings, have, malgré lui, made her, if a rather inexpensive expression be permitted, the quick-change artist of humanity. She is, to repeat, the Human Chameleon, taking her color from the shadow of the husband-rock beneath which she has, perforce, taken shelter. From childhood, she stands ready, a potential wife to be made to order—to be made in the image of—HIM. She can be anything HE wants. She even rejoices—or skillfully pretends to rejoice—to be anything HE wants. To all seeming, her individuality—once so captivatingly personal—is merged in his; yet who knows but that it has only been dangerously hidden away in some subterranean refuge of her being—as oppressed nations profess allegiance to their conquerors on the smiling streets, but, far below the surface, sing their own heartfelt songs in their own heart's language, and store their patient explosives against the day of retribution.

The metamorphoses of woman! Some new Ovid should



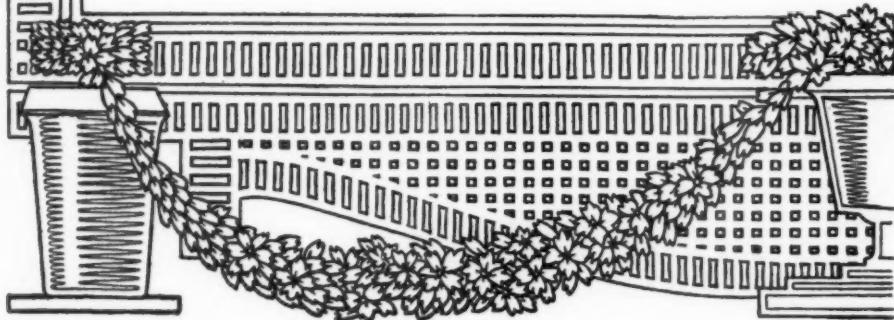
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write them for the modern world. How does woman do it?—and oh the pity of it!

"The high gods sigh for the cost and the pain—"

The terrible forms they are condemned to take—I mean the forms of their husbands; the grotesque masks they must wear, the piteous disguises beneath which they must shelter their sad and sacred selves!

I have known of a girl whose whole heart was in automobiles, race-horses, and champion lightweights—a young, unsuspecting American heart all a-flutter between Yale and Princeton, and unable to determine on which side to alight. Her real native language was that of the sporting-editor; her mastery of the technicalities of the turf, the ring, and the gridiron, astonished what she would once have called the "fans"—and yet, think how she threw herself away, and marvel at the miraculous skill and spirit with which she adapted herself to sudden bewildering conditions. Her father died suddenly, sordidly insolvent. She must marry to do what she could to support the falling roof-tree. But whom should she marry—whom indeed could she? The men after her own heart were strangely reticent, even absent. Fullbacks were more than usually at a loss for conversation; and even the little quarterback for whom she had made a gay college-song, and set it to her own music on the piano, for which she had quite an original gift, was

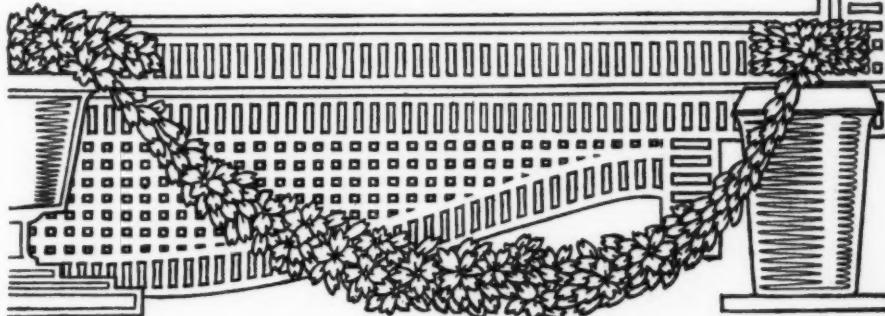


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called away to visit his people in Kentucky. At this crisis, a rich young poet presented himself. He hated music, and he had never seen a football match or attended a race. But he loved her. She was a brave girl, brought up in the open air, devoted to every out-of-door sport —so she married him. And now, if you call on her in her charming home, filled with mystic decoration, mystic music, and mystic visitors, you must not speak of those old enthusiasms, over which, as friends of old time, you were wont to glow, and use the well loved, expressive American metaphor. You wander solitary, looking and listening in vain for the old gridiron, race-track faces, the old familiar talk of the turf and the ticker. Instead, you see men and women looking like dilapidated violins, and hear voices like the voices of the æsthetic dead, and the conversation is a kind of intellectual verdigris. Yet, amid it all, she who once wrote that famous lyric to the famous little quarterback, seems dominantly, even joyously, at home. She is a woman. She is the eternal Chameleon. She has married a poet.

Voila!

This courageous girl was compelled by circumstances to live with the Artistic Temperament. And yet, take another example and try to see the point of view of another virgin martyr. The horrors of living with the Artistic Temperament form the commonplace material

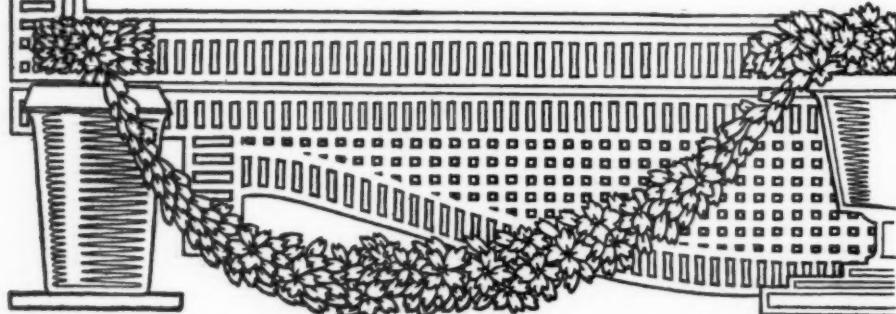


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of much modern fiction, and are always useful to the journalist. But there is another side. Think of the horrors of living with the In-Artistic Temperament! The heroism of certain poets, musicians, painters, and philosophers in this matter has not been sufficiently appreciated: Socrates with Xantippe, Dante with Gemma, Shakespeare with Ann Hathaway, Shelley with Harriet Westbrook, Byron with Miss Milbank, Heine with Mathilde, Burns with Jane Armour—and the whole long list.

But I am not so much thinking here of the case of men of genius lashed for life to peasants, milkmaids, cooks, scolds, and prim young ladies who paint water-colors for their middle-class drawing-rooms. Men of genius are not dependent on their wives for their environment. They are lonely beings at the best, and do the only thing they care about—their work—in spite of all domestic opposition. We have Socrates in spite of Xantippe, and Shakespeare in spite of Ann Hathaway. Neither the scold nor the fool could rob us of either. And, of course, when women are men of genius, as in the cases of George Sand or George Eliot, the same thing happens.

But there is a more delicate uncombative type of the artistic temperament, particularly among women, which has not quite the force to face the world alone, lacking

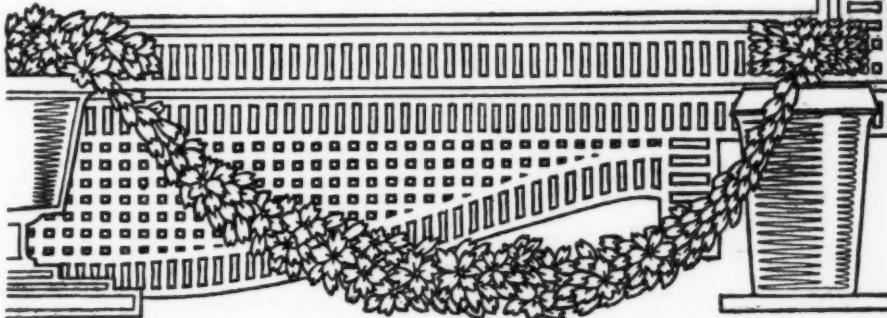


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that central hardness, which—with all his sensitiveness, mercifully protects the really creative artist in an inclement world.

This type does not so much aspire to create as to enjoy the beauty already created. It knows all the great music of the world, but composes none; all the great pictures, all the great poetry, but mercifully withholds its hand from creating any. The creation on which it has set its heart is mainly a home which shall be a harmony of these various interpretative perfections. Now this type, owing to some tragic, sordid, exigency of life, finds it necessary to marry a man whose mind oscillates between stocks and golf, prefers the pianette to Paderewski, Bougereau to Whistler, glaring electric-lights to soft-shaded lamps, cocktails to delicately fragrant wines, and—generally speaking—the brass-band. He loves his house to be filled with loud voices and loud boots on the stairs. The books she reads he cannot understand, and, therefore, affects to despise. Her friends are not his friends, but his friends must be her constant companions at long, vociferous dinners, all vulgar vitality and horse-play conversation.

Once, when quite a girl, she loved a great gentleman of France. They were to be married. They used to wander through the fairyland of old Paris together, picking up old silver and lace, or rapturously discovering a rare

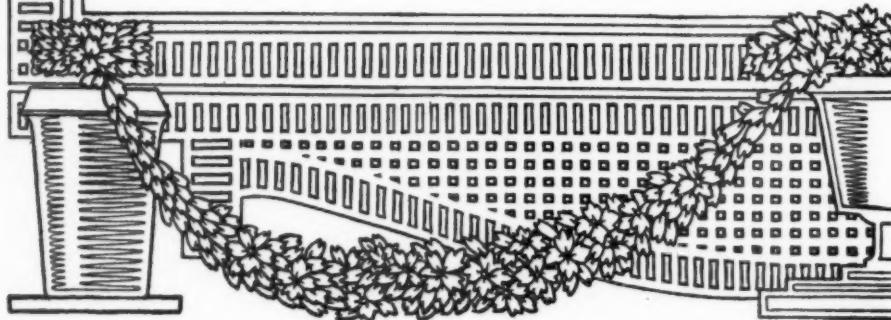


edition of Ronsard on one of the quais. He would persuade her to read those shy poems of hers that she kept hidden away in linen and lavender, and sing those old French catches, frail as a moonbeam, gay as a butterfly, and fleeting as a sigh, for which she had a voice as verily dainty as that of the old music to which she sang them. But he is gone. There is only one place for them to meet again—Paradise. Meanwhile, for the sake of others, she hides her old silver in a rosewood casket, and she hums those old Provençal songs only when she is sure that no one is by. She has married the In-Artistic Temperament with all its attendant horrors. She is a wife made to order—and, poor child, beautiful and strong as she is, she has a long way to travel before she once more goes rambling after old silver, or humming old songs in that glorious, golden city, which, by her, is called the capital of Paradise.

But I am very much afraid that I am drifting into a transcendental vein more native to myself than acceptable to the reader. Let me try a more practical vein, and attempt a few suggestions for the guidance of that sex that was once called “fair.”

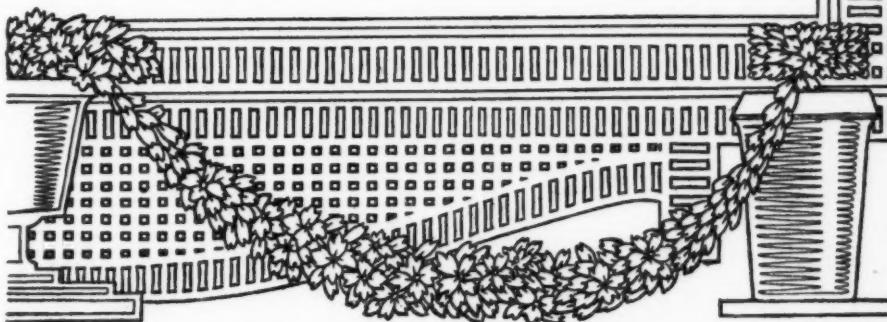
How shall a young woman direct her ways that she be well-pleasing to her lord?

Of course, as I have said before, the best wife for a man is the wife that God made for him, but many men



seem dissatisfied with God's handiwork, and prefer to make their wives for themselves, as if, so to say, the husband should take a measure of porcelain, some rose-leaves, and a handful of star-dust, and breathing upon them, make a strange little pink and white woman, with the moonlight for her eyes, and the sunlight for her hair—a wife he holds in his hands as a new-born father holds a new-born babe.

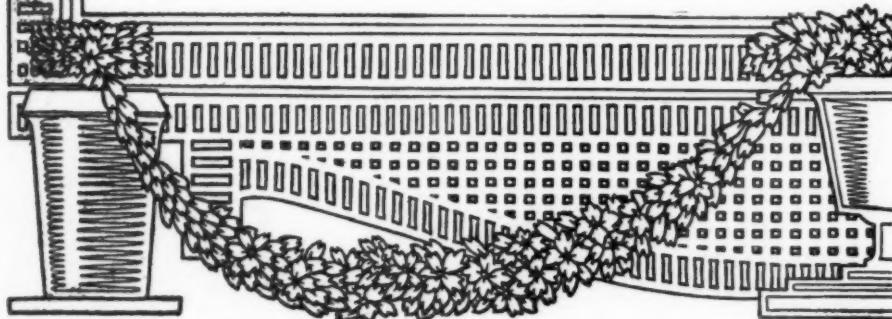
But perhaps the most sensible wife a man can take—the wife most adapted for human nature's daily food—is the wife that has been a wife before. She is already versed in the ways of man, and learned in the gentle art of "managing" husbands. She brings to her new husband the fruits of experience, and belongs to that class known as skilled persons. There are no surprises for her in the masculine psychology, no bewildering discoveries to be made. Like the old English dowager, she knows how "to feed the brute" and generally knows him by heart. Yes, I think the wise man is he who marries the wife that has been a wife before. In such a union there are none of those painful adjustments to be made between temperament and temperament which usually make the first year of the married life of the matrimonially inexperienced an agonizing duel of misunderstandings. Such a wife has mastered the masculine paradox, and realizes that a husband by his very nature is a bundle of con-



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tradictions; he is dogma, not reason; and the wife realizes that she must live by faith, rather than by any rationalistic interpretation of his words.

There is an old English story, a story I recommend to all young wives, which runs like this: A certain countryman in a certain village was in the habit of spending his evenings, and, incidentally, his earnings, at the village tavern. As the joviality of the evening progressed toward the small hours, and the jolly good fellows in the tap-room grew less and less distinct to each other in the muddled, smoke-filled atmosphere, the heart of the countryman, so warm and genial to his fellow topers around him, would begin to nourish a peculiar ferocity towards a picture which would persist in intruding itself upon the festive scene—the picture of a woman waiting up at home, with no jolly good fellows, no inebriating liberty to cheer her loneliness. Strangely enough, this picture did not inspire pity or remorse, but instead, a sullen anger against that wan figure seated under the patient lamp mending the children's clothes. Why did this wife sit up for him in that way and thus intrude her tiresome long-suffering upon his conscience! Why on earth couldn't she get to bed and leave him unhaunted to his cups and cronies? But suddenly his darkening mood would take another ugly turn. Why shouldn't she sit up for him, —her! And as at last the village revel-

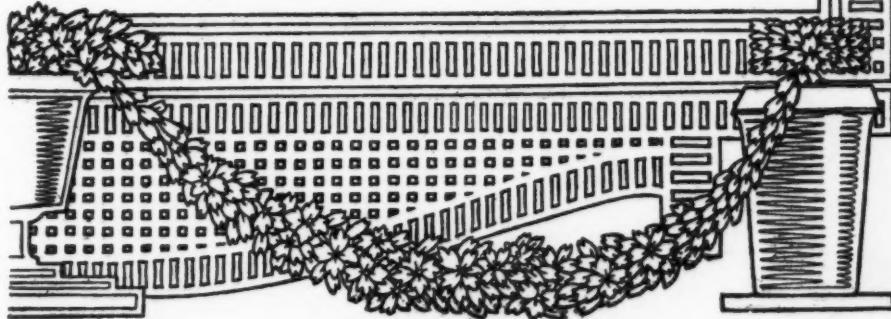


ers must leave and the lights go out, as he stumbled homeward through the lanes, precariously though skillfully avoiding the ditches, both moods would combine in this paradoxical formula, which he was invariably heard to mutter to himself each evening: "If my wife's up when I get home, I'll beat her; and if she's gone to bed, I'll beat her."

Thus, without knowing it, he uttered a profound axiom of the marital psychology, which will bear much pondering.

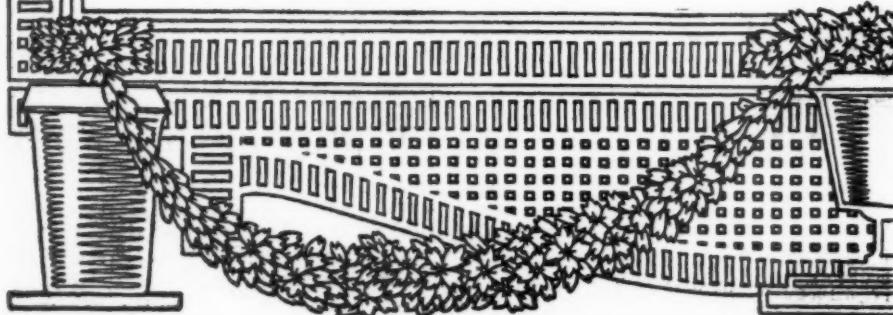
Wife-beating, is, of course, a crude method of shattering to bits the unsatisfactory divine, for the purpose of remoulding it nearer to the heart's desire; and, anyhow, I suppose that wife-beating is a lost art to-day—except among the upper classes; but that coarse countryman's phrase roughly sums up what one may call the cussedness of the eternal husband. The one law of his being is that he is a law unto himself—and to his wife as well. That countryman and my Lord Castlewood would have found much in common on the proper subjection of wives; and, of course Saint Paul was long before either of them: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But suffer not the woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve."

And, though Paul was an unmarried man, his doctrine



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has been the eagerly accepted doctrine of husbands in all ages. Wives desirous of being properly made to order cannot do better than study Saint Paul, and a rereading of Esmond, with special regard to poor Lady Castlewood, with her pathetic failure as a domestic Chameleon would furnish valuable hints. Lady Castlewood illustrates the greatest of all difficulties for wives endeavoring to make themselves to order—the difficulty that the husband himself does not know what he wants, yet demands it all the same. Only born instinct, a really natural gift, can help. Precepts are of little avail. If a man were asked to describe beforehand the kind of woman he would care to marry, he could not do it; or, if he had a clear-cut notion of her, and should afterwards meet its fulfillment, he would probably find her an unnatural monster, a female Frankenstein of his imagination. He expects her to be perfect, of course, even as he is perfect; yet if she is too perfect, she gets on his nerves. He expects her to echo all his ways and moods, yet again he expects her to preserve her own individuality and have some opinion of her own. He expects to have his own little innocent flirtations, but woe unto her if she turns her eyes to the right or the left. One right he particularly reserves to himself is that of talking by the hour of his former love-affairs, and expecting her heart-felt sympathy for his ecstasies over vanished faces; yet denying



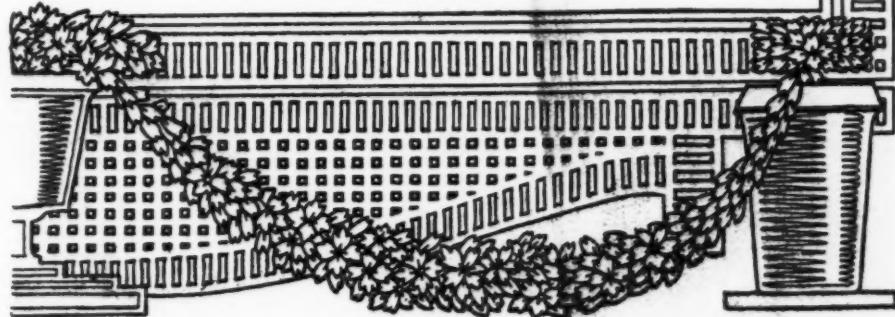
Richard · W· Gallienne ·

her the thrill of one tender reminiscence—for his lordship over her is jealously retrospective and permits her no dalliance with memory. In fact, before he was, she was not. For, as man was made in the image of God, the wife must be made in the image of her husband. The finite expression of his infinite, the dainty echo of his ponderous omniscience, the pearly shell that holds, as in a pink and opal case, the music of the mysterious ocean of his mind.

Yes! men, and particularly husbands are exceedingly comic creatures, and to laugh up your sleeve at your husband, yet love him all the time, is an art which every successful wife has possessed since man first met woman and the sad world began.

I read a delightful story of Ibsen the other day which should find a place in any primer for young wives. Ibsen, it appears, made a point of sewing his own buttons on. You couldn't trust a woman, he said, to sew a button on to stay. He was fond of saying this to his friends in the presence of his wife. She sat by and smiled, but when he was out of hearing, she whispered to one of those friends: "I always go over them again afterwards, because he never knots the thread."

What sublime tact was there! And how tenderly she spared her husband the knowledge of a possible imperfection—not to speak of preserving the peace of the



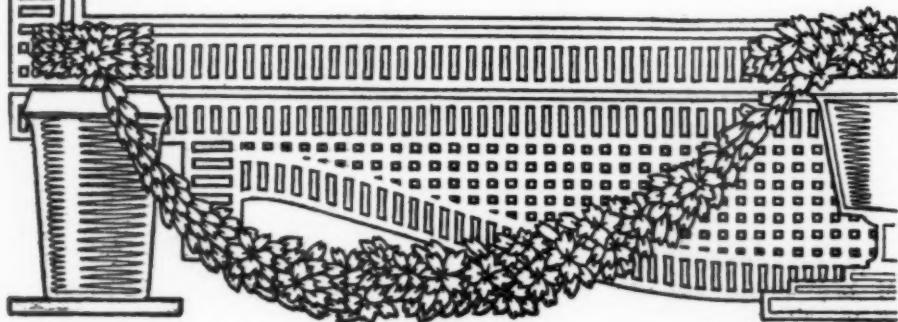
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household: for Henrik's physiognomy does not suggest marriage with him as a—well, I must not use the American word that comes naturally to my pen; let me say, instead—an easy task.

Wives of great men all remind us that—it is the woman that makes the marriage. She makes it before, and she makes it after. Unquestionably she has a born genius for marriage, which the man imperfectly possesses. And perhaps the woman who succeeds best in the special art of her sex, is she who lives by the old, eternal formulas, the first, and perhaps the last, of which is—"To love, honor, and obey."

For a time in our day it was the fashion for women to cry out against the third verb in the contract and insist on its omission. But in Kipling's phrase, such women were not really "of the marrying kind."

The wise wife that is from eternity to eternity—and ever shall be—has always realized the importance of, or really paid no attention to, that solemn vow of obedience. Wives have a great gift of mental reservation, and the really sensible members of the profession have always pronounced that shuddering word "obey" with special fervor, a blushing ardor of renunciation. Yes, Beauty, Babies, and 'Bedience are, one might say, the Three B's of womanhood—comprising the whole beautiful duty of wives.





Julia

An American Night's Adventure

BY GEORGE HIBBARD

Author of "A Transaction In Real Estate," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY EDMUND FREDERICK

THE white and gold ball-room offered a confusion of light and sound. Over the big apartment the great crystal chandelier cast its flood of subdued radiance, reinforced by the clustered sconces on the walls. The polished floor gave back the effulgence, and the tinsel of head-dress and ball-dress, as well as the sharper scintillation of gems, caught it and held it and broke it into a myriad brilliant points. Many gliding feet, though seeming to trip noiselessly, brought a gentle susurrus undercurrent unnoted to the ears. The hum of voices was evenly unbroken while the music rose and fell, crashed and languished. A

faint and mingled perfume filled the warm air, the heavy scent of the roses of the decorations affording a hot-house sweetness. Through it all the measure of the two-step swept—preeminently an expression of its period—the pressing, eager dance of to-day, which has found the waltz too slow and has turned from the quadrilles and lancers of our grandparents as completely as from the minuet of our forefathers.

Mr. Richard Shaw tarried by the wall, debating with himself the question of going home. He had asked every one to dance whom he was in duty bound to ask; then he had indulged himself in

two or three "turns," in doing which he had followed his own predilections.

The hour was not late, not more than half-past twelve, and the ball was at its height. The brightness and joyousness insensibly influenced him. Moreover, he was not of an age when such scenes have lost the power to attract. Therefore, he remained gazing eagerly and rather wistfully across the throng of passing revelers. He had no wish to depart, but then a consideration was forcing itself irresistibly upon his attention. A prosaic thought, which came with the insistence of the memory of the fated hour to Cinderella disturbed him. Was he not obliged to remember that on the following morning—on that very morning in fact—he was bound to be at his office. He sighed a little ruefully as he reflected on the trouble to be experienced by a young lawyer just beginning practice in undertaking the exacting rôle of a man of "society." For an instant he experienced a sharp bitterness of envy. When the floor was perfect, the music so good, and the *débutantes* so pretty, to leave was not easy, and yet—

"American girls are—"

He did not finish the sentence which he formulated to himself. Indeed, if he had been driven to conclude it, he would have experienced some difficulty in uniting in one word the ideas or impressions which had arisen as he watched regretfully the succession of festal clad maidens speeding by him. A whole series of frightfully contradictory terms could not have expressed just what he was thinking and feeling. Distracting, bewildering, marvelous, unsurpassed, unequalled, would only in a measure have conveyed a part of what was in his heart. Surprising, baffling, unaccountable, ineffable, uncontrollable, predominant, and irresistible might have been added without supplying a very much fuller rendering of all he had in mind.

Usually and almost inevitably, when a young man sets out to generalize to any degree about the daughters of Eve, he has in his eye some particular and shining examples of her descendants; nor was "Dick" Shaw any exception to the rule as he paused to take a last look

before departure. Apparently he was including the whole brilliant spectacle in his gaze, but as a matter of fact he saw only one slim, white figure, now stopping, now whirled away by some new man in the dance which she was "cutting."

He had merely been presented to Miss Julia Maxfield at the Edmonds' dinner. There she sat at the opposite side of the table from him, away at the other end, and he could do little more than cast furtive glances in her direction. Once their gaze had crossed and met, to the inexplicable confusion of both. At the ball during the evening, for some unaccountable reason he had not spoken to her, though he might very well have claimed a few moments. Subconsciously he felt the uselessness and mere tantalization of those few hurried instants, which was all he knew the time or place could allow.

Of what avail a hasty exchange of formalities and banalities when already he had indulged in idle, foolish visions of the joy of hours—of days—perhaps a lifetime spent by her side? Moreover, he had heard of her often, and what reason was there in an insignificant young man like himself giving a thought to such a brilliant young personage. To be sure this was latter day America, but was he not in a way indulging in as absurd dreaming as the youngest brother of the fairy tale who raises his eyes to the King's daughter? Was he not more ridiculous, in fact, because in fairy tales the youthful adventurer was pretty sure of finding an opportunity of winning the lady, whereas, in an age of arc-lights and automobiles, what chance had he of making anything of a "gallery play" even to attract her attention? Yes, a young and beautiful millionairess, with a reputation for originality and daring, which made her something of a famous character, was certainly as far removed from struggling young lawyers as any inmate in any place.

She was staying at the Gilmores. In a few days she would go away and he would never behold her more. When he saw her name in the newspapers as making some marriage, probably with some

great foreign title, he would feel a momentary, unjustifiable sensation of displeasure and anger. That would be all. He had better go. Common-sense counseled that he turn in, to be ready at the office early, to bury himself in the law instead of remaining there sighing after a mere fairy Princess in a world of ball-rooms to which his present fortune did not fit him to belong.

"Is—isn't this your dance, Mr. Shaw," a clear voice asked almost shyly.

He found himself gazing down into Miss Maxfield's starry eyes, and debating even in his perturbations as to their exact violet blueness.

"Of course," he answered, catching himself up with prompt presence of mind. "I was just coming."

With a gracious nod, which dismissed the man who stood beside her, Miss Maxfield turned to Shaw.

"To be sure," she began, when she was assured that what she said could not be overheard, "you had not asked me and so—Mohammed had to come to the mountain."

"That was because the mountain was a mountain of stupidity. If you knew how much I wanted to do it," Shaw assured her truthfully.

"Certainly you must say that—but—I am going to believe you," she replied more gravely. Then with great seriousness: "Do not think that I should behave in such a horribly bold manner without a reason. Even I am not usually in the habit of disregarding the properties to this alarming extent."

She paused reflectively, her fan pressed lightly against her lip, and a small wrinkle of distress on her smooth brow.

"I may have the dance now?" Shaw entreated gratefully.

"No," she declared abruptly, a shade of uncertainty on her appealing face. "I must speak to you. There is something—Oh, I know that I should not—but I can trust you, I am sure."

Which enigmatical utterance left Shaw in even further amazement.

"Come," she commanded swiftly, as thrusting her hand through his arm she exerted a gentle pressure which impelled him toward the door.

The next apartment was occupied by scattered groups or couples. Evidently not satisfied with what she found she did not tarry but passed through another entrance into a farther room of the suite, where a lesser number of people appeared in more intimate *tête-à-tête*. She went on, and only stopped in a small, softly illumined retreat which furnished complete seclusion.

"Oh," she exclaimed as she sank down on the cushioned divan, "I don't know what you think of me."

"Might—might I tell you?" he ventured.

"Or what you will think me," she continued, disregarding his speech and breaking forth suddenly and tremulously.

"I—you can help me."

She glanced swiftly at him and Shaw could have sworn that tears stood in her eyes; at least her face was earnest and apprehensive and she almost worked serious injury to her filmy handkerchief in her nervous handling of it.

"That is the reason I asked you—" she continued more firmly.

He drew a quick breath. At the same time his pulse gave a great throb and then went "racing" wildly. He clenched his hand, forcing his nails into his palms as if to convince himself that he was awake. For a moment he could not believe in the reality of the situation. She was asking aid from him. She had voluntarily sought him out and was appealing for assistance in something which her manner forced him to believe was a matter of more than ordinary moment.

"I—I am honored—" he stammered.

"Oh, are you going to fail me?" she exclaimed. "Shall I find you wanting?"

"I hope not," he answered simply and with businesslike directness.

"You do not know though what this implies," she proceeded impressively, as if reassured by his reply. "I am not asking you to bring me a glass of water or take me to my chaperone."

"I imagined as much," he said, "from your tone."

"It is something very unusual and amazing—and you do not know how much depends on it."

"If you would tell me," he suggested tentatively.

"If that is impossible? If I have to beg you to trust me wholly. If no matter what I wish to do I am obliged to ask you to do it blindly—to take a leap in the dark."

She went on wildly, as Shaw thought that there was nothing with such provocation he would not undertake.

"Perhaps you may be mistaken—may be exaggerating," he protested. "You, in your life, can't be in a position of great difficulty—"

"You don't know."

"Very well," he replied cheerfully. "It does not make any difference. I'm at your orders."

"Do you mean it?" she asked. "No matter what?"

"No matter what."

"If it should be something very extraordinary?"

She leaned forward, looking at him narrowly with gentle but shining eyes. If she had specified the finding of the Golden Fleece or demanded of him the Labors of Hercules he was in no mind to refuse: rather in a mood to welcome the opportunity gladly. He could hardly believe his senses or his luck. There, beneath that conservative roof, at the ball which was justly regarded as the most formal and splendid of the local season, to come on an adventure and one of such an astounding nature. He could hardly have been more dumbfounded if the stately Sargent portrait in the drawing-room beyond had stepped from its frame and had taken a place among the guests; if the figures of the tourney in the tapestry on the wall before him had actually begun to tilt at one another. Nothing could be more unexpected. Then he reflected that it was the way of adventures to be incredible; that in this was their very essence and significance and merit.

"What shall I do?" he demanded briefly.

Momentarily she appeared to be somewhat daunted. At least she glanced hurriedly about in a manner of uncertain significance, which might have indicated that she feared interruption, but also might have suggested meditating flight.

"No one can hear," he reassured her.

Miss Maxfield quickly gathered herself together. With a heightened color, with a little quicker breathing, with a sudden defiant little gesture of her hand she spoke.

"I hope it is not too late," she said. "I have to go and you will go with me."

"I do not even ask where," he announced intrepidly.

She vouchsafed a brief smile of gratitude and approval, then she went on urgently.

"You must be able to find some kind of a conveyance outside. There are cabs waiting there for people. You must make sure of one and come back to the dressing-room, where I shall be ready."

"Yes," he assented.

"Very well," she rose hurriedly. "Oh, you don't mind, you won't care if there should be—danger?"

"That's impossible," he replied incredulously, "in this American city of the present."

"I felt that I had better say it," she answered in perturbation.

"It'll be all in the day's work or the night's."

Again she flashed her approbation.

"You don't want to stop at the last moment?"

"No," he answered stoutly.

"Still—perhaps—"

She broke off and moved lightly away with a final backward glance.

"I'll be waiting for you."

Dazed, amazed, Shaw obeyed the directions given to him. Insensibly his surroundings seemed to have changed and he no longer viewed them in their familiar light.

The hack which he had engaged might have been a sedan-chair or a postchaise. The long twisting canvas tunnel through which he returned to the house the labyrinthian windings of a subterranean passage. The white covered back stairs of the conventional mansion the secret way of a castle. His imagination was aflame and his blood was up. One is not under thirty for nothing, nor when one has indulged in half-acknowledged thoughts of playing the hero is the first opportunity to appear in the character with all the



"Come!" she commanded swiftly, thrusting her hand through his arm

regulation accessories to be disregarded. Rather is the chance to be seized; the time come to burn one's ship and one's fingers, if necessary; to make hay while the sun shines or the moon.

When Shaw arrived in the upper main hallway he found Miss Maxfield awaiting him before the dressing-room door in a state of rather visible nervousness. At least she was clearly too restless to be able to sit down and her fair face under its lacey wrappings was troubled and anxious.

"Oh, you've come back," she exclaimed with rather a doubtful air as he moved swiftly toward her.

"I've got the carriage," he rejoined. "Everything is ready. Are you?"

"Y—yes," she answered unsteadily. Then with a straightening of her slim figure and a slightly agitated laugh, "Lead on, McDuff."

"But I'm not doing the leading. It's you," he objected.

"True," she replied swiftly. "Then let all who love me follow me."

Without a word he succeeded her down the steps and side by side they passed out to the waiting equipage. The door of the vehicle was open and she sprang lightly in.

"Where shall he drive?" Shaw demanded.

"Why—" Miss Maxfield appeared to consider in some doubt and then whispered: "I can't say here. Tell him to go directly out. You can give him the order later."

Shaw obeyed.

As he buttoned his overcoat he had something of the sensation of drawing a cloak about him. In placing his hand on his cigaret-case in his pocket he might have been putting it on the hilt of a sword. So, at least, in his disposition, he felt as he sprang into the carriage, shut the door, and seated himself beside her. She, for her part, had withdrawn into the corner, where she gave the impression of having huddled herself up as if shrinking away in affright.

"We're off," he continued. "Now, perhaps, I may hear more."

"Not just—even yet, please," she implored.

Her desire for conversation did not appear strong, and in truth Shaw gathered the impression that she wished to be let alone for reflection.

Summing up his ideas of what was the proper conduct for a hero in charge of a damsel in distress he concluded that silence was the better part of valor and decided to bide his time. The slow hack-horses plodded uninspiringly up the asphalt along the well known avenue through which he passed every day on his way down-town and back. Still, in the uneven illumination of the electric-light and to his whirling senses, there was something exceptional in the scene. The dwellings standing back beyond spreading lawns were larger and more impressive, while the black, unilluminated places were vague spaces of crowding mystery.

"Perhaps I should not have drawn you into this," she broke forth unexpectedly. "I have been selfish, unfair."

"Not if I come voluntarily."

"Though I can't be wholly outspoken, I should give you some idea of the risk you run. What if I had become involved in a strange affair which I did not quite understand myself—which placed me in the greatest peril."

"You speak as if you had been in a Russian political plot or were mixed up with the Black Hand."

"Now you are laughing at me," she said reproachfully.

"No, I'm not. Really, though, it's hard to be convinced. I can't help wondering how soon we shall hear the sound of pursuit or when we are to put on our disguises."

"Please," she begged. "This has gone too far to be a laughing matter. I don't exactly say it is a question of life and death—"

"Never mind," he answered with perfect composure.

"Oh, dear," she exclaimed suddenly. "If you won't be frightened."

"Do you want me to be?"

"No—no!" she answered unsteadily.

"I know there is nothing that I could not do for you," he replied in a low tone.

He was wondering if this was too early in the game to begin to make love

to her, to tell her what was very truly and sincerely in his heart, to declare that he had gazed at her from afar with adoration yet with a knowledge of the hopelessness of his case. Could he at this early stage assure her of his joy at the strange circumstances which permitted him to be near her. He ran over in his mind the precedents, and concluded that no matter how marvelous the circumstances the modern paladin always refrained from speaking for a time, that honor required that he should not take advantage of the lady's plight even to assure her of his undying affections.

"Where are we now?" she asked hurriedly.

"Almost at the Park," he answered.

"Then the time has almost come," she said as if speaking to herself. "I can depend on you."

"I am going to see this through," he announced briefly.

"No girl ever was in such a position," she declared as if in sudden desperation.

"Rely on me," he assured her. He ventured to take her hand and for an instant raised it to his lips, he satisfying himself with the thought that such an action at such a moment was always eminently appropriate and permissible. Instead of withdrawing her fingers she allowed them for a second to remain in his grasp, as if in her distress she were unmindful of what was taking place.

"There is no other way," she exclaimed wildly and peered out through the open carriage-window.

After a few minutes of watching she evidently found what she sought and spoke rapidly.

"There—there! That's the place. Tell him to drive there!"

As she withdrew her head Shaw thrust himself out through the opening with the intention of guiding the driver. As he did so he glanced in the direction in which Julia Maxfield had dramatically pointed. His quick inspection revealed a high iron fence on the edge of extensive grounds, behind which grew a line of heavy evergreens. Two stone pillars flanked a carriage-entrance, which gave a view of a big, square, grim house at some distance from the street. Also on

one side of the gateway was a large white board on which "For Sale" was inscribed in black letters. In fact, Shaw remembered the place well, a number of times in passing having carelessly noted it as possessing in a marked degree the down-at-the-heel aspect and run-to-seed character of unoccupied property long seeking a purchaser.

At the same moment that he recalled the significant features of the spot he experienced a newly vivid sensation of excitement. The premises were so exactly of the sort that might be expected to furnish the background for the incidents of such an undertaking as that in which he was now engaged. If he had transitorily entertained any doubts of the business in hand these uneasy questions were dissipated by the knowledge of what was clearly the present end of the drive. He gave the necessary command to the cabman to turn in, and looked with greater confidence and content at the gloomy prospect as the carriage crawled up the curving drive.

When the wheels finally came to a stop and he stepped out, he was further encouraged by the sight of the broad high façade of the unlighted dwelling. The dark high mass offered an ominous and threatening appearance while the stillness and loneliness of the locality bore a lurking suggestion of peril. His companion, who had not descended, looked out after him, leaning forward from the carriage as she did so.

"I—I think you had better ring," she suggested.

Only after some search was Shaw able to discover the old fashioned bell-pull. He drew this out and let it snap back sharply. With the vigor of his action he almost expected some audible result. As he stood and heard nothing, the silence affected him chillingly. He paused, and for the first time his spirit sank under the influence of the depressing surroundings.

"Don't they answer?" Julia Maxfield's sweet voice inquired in almost the accents of relief. "Doesn't any one come?"

"No. I'll try again."

He gave an even more violent tug at the handle, drawing it out to the full ex-

tent. Once more the stillness of the night was unbroken.

"It's no use," she exclaimed. "I'll have to give up after all." Then she added eagerly: "Come! Come!"

"If you wish to get in—if it's of any use to you to do it," he replied, "we'd better try a little longer. There may be other ways."

He had placed his hand on the big knob of the massive door and thereupon shook it. As he did this the handle turned with the grasp.

"Why, it's open," he cried. "There's nothing to stop us." He pushed back the portal and took a step forward into the darkness of the hall. "What next?"

"Oh don't—don't!" she cried, jumping hurriedly from the conveyance and running after him.

"Why not?" he asked, pausing irresolutely. "We're only doing what we set out to do and what you want—"

She advanced to his side a little over the threshold and in her earnestness and anxiety laid her hand upon his arm.

"I was mad to come here," she ejaculated. "It is a part of the recklessness of the whole."

Shaw started—his heart gave an unpleasant bound and then stood still.

"Right you are, lady," said a heavy, hoarse voice somewhere near in the blackness.

At the same instant a blinding glow dazzled Shaw's eyes and the door behind was slammed suddenly shut.

"We've got you and you won't be such fools as to make any fuss," the same voice spoke out of the obscurity more easily. "Jim, just give us a little more light on the subject."

The rasp of a scratched match followed the request, there was a quick flare and in a moment a single gas-burner, one of a number against the wall, furnished dim illumination to the scene. Instantly Shaw perceived that he stood at the end of a big, wholly unfurnished and barren hallway with three large and rather rough looking men regarding him and his fair companion with deep interest. With almost equal rapidity, from their unmistakable appearance, he discovered that those surrounding them were mem-

bers of the police-force, unquestionably belonging to the plain-clothes' portion of it.

"Well," remarked the first spokesman, "you're the first bunch we've picked, but," he viewed his prisoners curiously, "we weren't countin' on any such peaches."

Not for a moment had Shaw lost consciousness of Julia Maxfield. Her clasp on his arm had grown closer. Now she was clinging to him in desperation, her dark eyes expressing uncontrollable terror and wonder. She cowered against him as if for protection in what was clearly a wholly unexpected catastrophe.

"Why," Shaw demanded gazing at her, "didn't you expect this?"

"Heavens no!" she cried in horror.

"What then—" he began.

"I never could have imagined such a thing. Oh, what can we do?"

"I don't understand," he admitted helplessly.

The sound of wheels outside indicated the hasty departure of the carriage.

"That feller's driving off," rasped the man in command. "Why didn't some of you stop him? He may have been in this and we could have used the hack to take them to the station. Now you'll have to telephone for the patrol-wagon. Go do it at once, Jim."

"Look here," Shaw advanced boldly, "what do you mean? This is Miss—Never mind," he interrupted himself. "I'm—but that doesn't matter either, just now. Do we look like people to be arrested?"

"No," the officer confessed, "but we were given to understand that you was reg'lar high-toned crooks—"

"Come! Come!" Shaw declared. "This is nonsense. You've got to let us go."

"Can't be done," returned the other. "Now," he continued with the good-humored and contemptuous indulgence displayed by the average American policeman to the criminal in his charge, "I put it to you. Aint people comin' to a deserted house in the middle of the night more than layin' themselves open to suspicion?"

"There might be a perfectly innocent reason for our conduct," urged Shaw.



"Now is the chance for you to be a hero."

"Not," continued the man argumentatively, "when that house, as you're likely to know, has been the lay-out of the slickest gang of counterfeiters the country's seen for some time. When we've pinched the principals and have been keeping quiet here waitin' to catch any of the dealers and shovers that come along; when, I say, you consider the place, the time, and the circumstances, aint there something more than suspicious in you and this little lady droppin' in here?"

"Counterfeiters!" gasped Shaw, glancing at Julia Maxfield.

"Oh, don't look at me that way," she cried.

"You see," the official proceeded, "we're secret-service people actin' in connection with the local authorities—but I guess there is no need of me tellin' you all this. You're wise, all right. You know it all, well an' good. Now, Jim, the best thing'll be to put 'em in the upper room until we get away from here. Get a move on up the stairs."

"I—" Shaw began and then desisted seeing that argument was useless.

Silently he allowed himself to be conducted to the floor above, Julia Maxfield, in a remarkable condition of humility, slipping along beside him. She crept forward, her lacey fineries dragging disregarded over the bare boards and up the dusty, uncarpeted steps. Indeed, she appeared a very different being from the radiant young creature of the ball-room, no longer carrying herself with proud fearlessness but rather with a thoroughly daunted mien.

Arrived before a door in the upper passage the policeman threw it back, disclosing a chamber lit with a candle and warmed with a single small oil-stove.

"We don't want to freeze the girl in those togs she has on," he observed, "an' she'll be more comfortable here."

Shaw stood aside to allow Julia Maxfield to precede him. Slowly she went on and cast herself down in one of the hard wooden seats. He followed, and as he did so his captor spoke.

"You two'll be all right there while we watch below for anything else doing."

At the last words he closed the door quickly and silently, and Shaw, turning,

faced his fellow prisoner, who had half-risen and with clasped hands was regarding him agonizingly.

"This, I imagine," he said, "hasn't turned out quite as you hoped."

"No," she replied dully, "it certainly has not. I shall have to let you know all now."

"If you had in the beginning—"

Shaw allowed himself to remonstrate mildly.

"It would have been better," she moaned. "Or it would have been better if there had not been any beginning. Surely you don't think that I have anything to do with—counterfeiters."

"No," replied Shaw decidedly. "Of course not. That's impossible. Yet I don't see—"

"It's horrible," she cried, wringing her hands in her distress. "I—no one ever was so foolish, but I did not think there could be any harm. Oh! This is the way it was. I had seen you at the Edmonds' dinner and I liked you—"

"I am glad of that," Shaw observed, though even at the moment and in deep perplexity as he was his heart gave a throb of uncontrollable delight.

"A girl knows so little about a man—can know so little in the way they have to see them, under the most conventional circumstances and with the most usual conditions. Suddenly, to-night, I was bored to death. The thought came to me that I should like to find out what a man would do—a nice man, yes—if something more were demanded of him than the strict, everyday commonplace. If he were called upon to act in the way men are called upon to act in history—if he were placed in an exceptional position—if an appeal was made to him in a mysterious manner, as in a story of adventure. I lost my head and told you all I did—made it up."

"You were playing with me," he said seriously.

"Yes," she confessed in confusion, "in a way. I wished to test you."

"But why leave the Meadoways'?"

"I wanted to go home. I tell you I was having a stupid time; and when you took it all so seriously and nicely I could not back out. I had to keep it

up. Indeed, I became interested, and made up my mind to see what could happen; my sporting-blood was up."

"Yes," he assented, "but coming to this house?"

"Don't you see?" she continued hurriedly. "When we got in the carriage and were driving on and on and there seemed to be no end I didn't know what to do. I couldn't lamely own up and back down and ask to go to the Gil-mores. That would have been too ignominious. There had to be some climax; some artistic finish to it.

"Just then, as we were near the park, I thought of this place for sale, which I had seen every day as I passed in the automobile. I believed, of course, it was empty, for nothing ever looked more deserted. I jumped at the idea of taking you there and trying to get in, and then when we couldn't, dramatically declaring that nothing could be done—that the case was hopeless and—then go quietly back," she ended lamely.

"Well, we seemed to have got in all right," Shaw remarked grimly.

"Don't blame me, please. I was wrong and absurd, but I never imagined there could be anything serious. I wanted an adventure," she laughed tremulously. "I seem to have fallen into the real thing."



"Isn't it—isn't it perfectly—delightful," she murmured

"I don't know," he answered slowly. "Of course they will let us go as soon as they find out."

"The newspapers, though!" she gasped in a tone of despair.

"True," he answered. "It would make a pretty story."

"It must not be," she enjoined ear-

nestly. "You won't permit it. You must save us. Now is the chance for you to be the hero. To carry all before you."

"You see, it's a business to which I'm not accustomed."

"I'm beginning to think that having really truly exciting things happen," she said with a return of her old alertness, "isn't all that idle fancy paints it."

"I wonder if we could break out of this," he mused.

As he spoke he went to the window, the shutters of which were closed tight. These he opened and cautiously pushed up the sash, which he found was unfastened.

"Too high from the ground to jump," he observed.

"We are actually prisoners," she exclaimed, following him.

"Apparently," he answered, "and yet I don't know."

He thrust his head out.

"There, I think, is a ladder. I can just see it in the darkness, leaning against the wall farther along. No, it's against a roof of a lower part of the building. If there was a way of reaching it. Hold on!"

He pushed his body still more through the window and looked about. Next he turned and climbing on the sill stood up.

"There's a small ornamental ledge running across the wall here. If there is a hold for my fingers I can work along on it until I reach the end and can get my feet on the gutter of the next roof. The distance is not great. Good enough. I've a grip on it."

Even as he spoke she saw him swing himself sideways. With rapidly beating heart she hung over the window-sill gazing after him.

"Oh, be careful," she whispered.

"All right," he answered.

In a panic of anxiety she watched him dangling against the bricks. Rigid with intense absorption she followed him with her eyes as slowly he slipped his hands along the narrow coping on which he precariously supported himself. To the point where he could let go was not many feet but the time appeared endless to her until she saw him plant himself on the projection below

him. The next moment he had steadied himself, turned, and crept along on top of the smaller wing against which the ladder rested.

Julia Maxfield drew a long breath, and as she did this she felt tears in her eyes. The strain of watching the perilous transit had been more than she had imagined and the relief proportionally greater. For an instant she remained panting at the open window, not very clearly conscious of what was taking place. A dark object rearing itself before her attracted her attention and brought her back to clearer consciousness. As the thing bumped against the ledge before her she became aware that Shaw had raised the ladder and was at that moment running up it.

"Truly," she rewarded him enthusiastically, "none of them could have done better. It was perfect. I am almost glad we came."

"Hurry up!" he interrupted. "There is not a minute to lose. Do you think you can manage it?"

"Of course," she declared boldly, as she twisted herself round and placed one satin shod foot and silk clad ankle on a rung of the ladder. A descent from such a height by such a means in all the voluminous amount of her ball-gown was not a matter of easy accomplishment. She was, however, a young woman of the day, with all of the out-of-door habit and training of the time. With Shaw keeping step in the descent and half-supporting her she finally reached the foot. There she paused for a moment, speechless, before jumping to the earth, while his arm was still held firmly about her.

"Isn't it—isn't it perfectly—delightful?" she murmured in subdued rapture.

"I'm beginning thoroughly to enjoy it myself," he responded readily.

"Now what?"

"We must steal away as quietly as possible."

Side by side they crept on in the deeper shadow beside the building.

For a few steps all went well. Then Shaw, with an exclamation, tripped in the obscurity against a length of tin pipe. This, striking against a box on

which were piled a number of flower-pots, brought it down. The crash of the overthrow appeared deafening. The two fugitives listened fearfully as the front door of the mansion was quickly thrown open and their jailers hurriedly issued forth. They saw the gleam of the flash-lights dance hither and thither like huge fireflies in the night.

"Come!" commanded Shaw. "We've got to run for it."

Whether he put out his hand and took hers or whether he found hers resting in his without any motion on his part he could not tell. At least, hand in hand, they sped forward together. Instinctively he made for the thick clump of trees and shrubs across the drive as offering the first shelter. Side by side they ran, she with her gown gathered about her and making as good speed as she was able. They broke through the shrubs, long strips of her frail draperies being left dangling on the branches. On they kept through the extensive grounds, hearing the sounds of pursuit always close behind them.

"Where can we go?" she breathed.

"I don't know," he answered recklessly. "It's a case of trusting to luck."

Forward they scurried through the neglected underbrush. In a few minutes they came to the edge of the plantation across which they were flying and looked out on a wide and open lawn.

"We've got to get across that," he declared.

"There is a building on the other side, and another house," she announced quickly. "We might hide somewhere about them."

At a better pace in the open they flew over the ground. Quickly they were beneath the structure which they had seen from the grove. A window, which almost reached the ground, was before them. Eagerly Shaw tried it. Much to his surprise he lifted the frame without difficulty.

"Here, in here," he said.

"They—they're coming," she exclaimed, as she saw dark forms breaking out of the trees they had left.

Next, holding hands, they found themselves in the blackness into which they

had scrambled through the window. Listening, they heard the sounds made by the pursuers beating about their refuge.

"We're trapped," she whispered.

"Never give up the ship," he answered, and as he moved his unemployed hand it struck against a large object beside him. "By Jove, an automobile."

"An automobile," she repeated in wonder.

"I know where we are now," he exclaimed. "We're in the Brewster's stable which they use as their garage. Their place is next to the house for sale where we have been. This is their car—a 'Great Comet,' and I've driven one. If we could—"

"We can! We can!" she cried ecstatically. "We'll unfasten the door and push it open carefully. Then you can crank the machine and we'll dash out through them before they can stop us."

"Capital," he agreed. "You find out about the door and I'll get busy with the motor."

Immediately they separated, each groping a course in a voyage of discovery.

"I've found the bolt," her soft voice came to him out of the gloom. "I've slipped it back."

"All right," he replied. "Do you think you can open the door and run back and jump in while I start her up? That way we'll lose less time."

"Yes," she assured confidently.

He stood with his hands on the crank, ready to begin action as soon as he saw a way clear for the car. He heard the rattle as the door slid aside. Suddenly a square of more transparent darkness appeared and he knew that he was gazing at a patch of the night-sky. In a frenzy he threw himself on the handle and worked as he never had before to catch the spark. The first time and the second he missed. On the third trial he heard the welcome, responsive rumbling of the interior of the engine which told him of success.

"Are you in?" he demanded.

"Yes, yes," she cried. "Hurry, hurry!"

He sprang into the chauffeur's seat and set the car in motion. At a rate at which it had never before left its quar-



"He's still there," she announced, leaning out

ters the Great Comet darted through the opening. As they broke away Shaw and Julia Maxwell saw black shapes hurrying up excitedly.

"Hold on! Stop there!"

The words were hardly audible with the noise and speed of the onrush as the pursuers shouted vainly after them.

"Safe," she cried, sitting up very erect, with her eyes shining brightly under the arc-light toward which they were hurrying.

"I don't know," Shaw returned sharply. "Listen!"

"What's that?" she asked, as she hearkened in obedience and heard behind them a rapid succession of dull explosions.

"It's a motor-cycle," he replied. "Some one of the squad is with them. We'll have to have a race."

She nodded, with no abatement of her exultation. Rather she appeared to delight in the opportunity for fresh ex-

perience. She gathered herself together and sank luxuriously back in her place, pulling as well as she could her silken wrap closer about her.

"You'll be cold," he suggested.

"Never mind," she answered impatiently. "Oh, I'm too excited to feel anything. I'm having the time of my life."

Along the avenue they dashed, the speed at which they were going appearing even greater with the silence and lifelessness of the scene.

The Great Comet was now doing almost all that its forty-five horse-power could accomplish, and the sharp Winter-air of the early morning sang past their ears. Still the chug-chugging behind them sounded as distinctly, if not more clearly.

"We are not shaking him off," Shaw observed.

Onto the macadamized park-drive they swept. About the curve by the fountain they went. At miles beyond regulation limit they tore down the hill by the lake and up the other side. With gaining momentum they sped along the straight course by the water-side.

"He's still there," she announced, leaning out to listen.

"Then there is only one way for it," he replied between his teeth.

Round a sharp turn a clump of elms rose before them. Abruptly he decreased the rate at which they were advancing.

"What are you going to do?" she inquired apprehensively.

When he was nearly opposite the dark shelter of the trees, with the automobile running more slowly he steered abruptly from the road. She felt a sudden sharp jolt as the wheels came over the gutter and up the small bank. A light twig struck her shoulder and whipped across her face. The next instant she found herself seated in the car with the power shut off screened by the thick branches.

"Oh!" she murmured, and instantly her hand went out and again clasped his.

Motionless she remained, her fingers tightening on his as the touf-touf of their hunter's cycle grew louder, seemed to smite on their ears, passed in a rapid fusillade, and began to diminish.

"He's making such a rumpus himself he can't hear us," Shaw observed. "He'll soon find out, though, and come back."

"Then we can't stay here—we can't anyway," she laughed.

"No—on again," he cried leaping to the ground while she jumped after him.

He paused a moment fumbling in his pockets. Then he drew forth a piece of paper and produced a pencil. For a second he scribbled.

"There," he said, as he affixed the writing to the automobile. 'The property of J. Addison Brewster, Algonquin Avenue.' Off we go now."

At a more moderate rate than when they had fled before, but still rapidly, they walked between the trees down a gentle incline.

"But," she exclaimed glancing down, "I am a frightful object."

"You—you never looked prettier in your life," he assured her with conviction.

Her eyes darted a quick thankfulness at him.

"How can I say anything," she began.

"Don't," he answered.

"I must," she cried emphatically. "You are a *preux chevalier*—a true hero without fear and without reproach. You have not been found wanting—you are perfectly splendid and I am proud—"

Suddenly she stopped.

"Dear me," she said, "I didn't want to break down. No heroine can do that, and I'm one if ever there was. At least I've been through as much as one, but, oh—"

For a second she hesitated half sobbing, half laughing and wholly resting against his shoulder.

"I never thought it was like this. And I never can thank you enough—or—or admire you enough. I suppose the Lady Imogen would take it all as a matter of course but I am an ordinary, everyday girl and—and I can't."

"Why, it's been nothing," he assured her soothingly.

"It's been everything," she asserted. "It has shown me that a man can be—all I hoped. That you *are*."

"I'd like to have you think that," he said warmly.

"I'm glad of every bit of it. You have saved me."

"We are not out of it—not literally out of the woods yet," he remarked.

"Where are we?" she inquired indifferently as she looked about.

"On the border of the Park two miles at least from the Gilmores and with no means of getting there."

"I don't care," she answered cheerfully.

"We must find a way."

"I can walk."

"Two miles in the state we're in—at this hour of the night or morning?"

"Oh, you'll manage it," she said confidently "after all we've been through. What's that?" she asked with a sudden start.

Up the street in the dark they saw a dim shape. They heard the steady thud of a horse's slow heavy feet and accompanying this came an unusual rattling and jiggling clatter.

"I believe," said Shaw joyously, "that is the faithful and early milkman."

As the cart—carrying Shaw and Julia crowded in the front seat beside the boy—rolled beneath the stately *porte cochère* of the Gilmore mansion, she at length broke the long silence.

"What time is it?"

"I don't know," he answered.

"So much has happened it seems a century."

After he had helped her down and given the youth the bill which he had ready in his hand, he joined her.

"My maid will be up and waiting for me," she said. "I can slip in and she will not say anything as she is my old nurse and is devoted to me. Good-night."

She held out her hand as they stood before the massive portal, after he had touched the button of the electric-bell.

"Good-night," he said gravely.

Swiftly she placed a hand on each of his shoulders looking up at him.

"Oh, I believe I am tired. I—I can't say anything now. Come to-morrow—this afternoon at five. I shall be in then and—alone."

John Dickman—Assistant

BY WILLIAM R. LIGHTON

ILLUSTRATED BY GAYLE HOSKINS

THERE was an air of morning-splendor about John Dickman as he walked down Lincoln street to his office in the C. & P. railroad headquarters—the jocund splendor of a morning in the height of Summer—rich, vital, lusty. No heir-apparent to a throne, no care-free tramp of the highways could have seemed more jovially at peace with the scheme of things than he.

Middle-aged, one would have called him at first flash; but this judgment would have been softened a bit after a second glance. There was more than a hint of steel-gray in the closely cropped hair about his temples; but a burly solidity was in his big body, and a ruddy flush of youthful health was upon him; in his alert blue eyes was a living light, and

there was a strong lift in his square shoulders. He carried himself as one to whom life had given many things worth having.

It was getting on toward ten o'clock, but Dickman was in no hurry; he moved with a large, benign leisure. He appeared to know everyone on the streets; clerks, draymen, lawyers, grim-lipped business-folk, and shuffling nondescripts, all gave him greeting in passing, and each received a hail-fellow word and a generous wave of his big hand. It was plain enough that he was popular.

Even the stolid, pasty face of the elevator-boy at headquarters lighted a trifle, with a glance of half-fearful comradeship, as the genial figure entered the iron cage. Dickman seemed to draw no

distinction in his favors, for he laid a subtly caressing hand upon the lad's shoulder, beaming upon him.

"Well, son, how's tricks this morning?" he asked, in a manner of intimate concern. "First rate, eh? That's right; that's good!" His deep voice rolled out a cheerful laugh that echoed richly through the wide marble rotunda. "That's right! Keep it up! That's good!"

Toward the last the full tones became a bit perfunctory, the good-humored smile a trifle vague, as if interest and attention were not perfectly sustained. The day's work was closely impending, and as Dickman stepped from the cage at his floor, his leisurely step quickened in obedience to a nervous impulse.

He passed many doors along the corridor, their plate-glass panels bearing square gold letterings: "General Manager;" "General Passenger Agent;" "General Solicitor"—none of inferior rank. But the door before which he halted held no titled blazonry; only the one modest word, "Assistant." Within those syllables his official identity lay concealed.

The room wore an aspect of severe, somber elegance. A dozen letters lay in a neat pile upon the massive desk, with a thick bundle of newspaper-clippings. He glanced over the letters hurriedly and pushed them aside; then he settled himself in his chair, lit a fat, gold-banded cigar and picked up the first of the clippings, reading it through with conscientious care. As he read, his lips became a rigid line and the placid brow he had shown on the street gathered a deep furrow. When that was finished, he laid it aside and passed to the next and the next, through full two-score, with slow, absorbed precision, pausing now and then to draw a penciled line around a paragraph or a name, and getting the meaning and bearing of every word.

One subject ran through all: State politics; the chances of rival candidates for State offices; the probable balance of power in the legislature, as between the railroad-machine and the people; all sorts and conditions of gossip and forecast, wise and fatuous, full and empty of knowledge. One theme recurred persist-

ently, palpitating through the lines like a pulse disordered by excitement—a formless, confused ebb and flow of opinion upon the question of whether the railroads of the State might be constrained to shoulder their just part of the burden of taxation. A few of the stronger metropolitan journals—administration organs—affected to scoff at the demand as at a foolish whim of demagogues; others spoke pointedly and freely of recent official dishonor which had helped out the railroads' "graft" at the capital; all made it appear that this was a distinct issue before the people.

When his reading was finished, Dickman sat for a half-hour in undisturbed quiet, finishing his cigar very deliberately, pondering, grim-lipped, intent. By-and-by he sorted out a few of the clippings, lit a fresh cigar and went with a firm, assured step to the door next his own, lettered "General Manager." Once face to face with his chief, in the inner precincts of privacy, he lost no time in getting to his point.

"We made a mistake in cutting off the *Oxford Tribune* man's annual," he said, "and we made another in not sending one to the *Belmont Argus*. They're tuning up too strong against us. We want those counties. Better let me fix 'em."

The general manager answered with a curt nod. He was not used to wasting words. He was a seasoned veteran in the sterner part of life, winterishly hard and gray and cold, his heavy-featured face habitually, studiously expressionless, save for the light of power that shone from his deep-set, thick-lidded eyes. Not for nothing had he been put into his place.

"The rest is going pretty well," Dickman added presently. "There's nothing new that amounts to much, except that Jim Kirsch of Newton wants to be Commissioner of Public Properties."

"Kirsch?" the general manager echoed, stolidly. "Well? That's one of the places on the tax-board. Is this fellow ours?"

"Oh, he's anybody's. He's been on the bargain-counter ten years, till he's so shopworn it wouldn't be any pleasure to own him. The people are on to him, too. We can't take chances with him."

The general manager stirred uneasily

in his chair. "We've got to have that board this time, Dick. The governor's the only one we're sure of yet. Looks to me as if Morton will get the treasury, in spite of us."

Dickman nodded. "We can't head him off. I've about quit trying."

"Well, then, you've got to find a man for this Public Properties job, that's all."

"I think I've got him," said Dickman. "Do you know a lawyer here named Boltwood?"

"No. Who is he?"

"Nobody, except to a little bunch of his friends. But he'll do, first-rate. The thing will have to be—well—managed some. He's got what they call 'convictions' on the tax-proposition. He's been making addresses to the Civic Union and breaking into print a bit, lately. But I've been feeling him. He'd be easy enough, after we'd landed him."

For the first time the older man permitted his graven features to quicken with a show of feeling—a feeling of sturdy distaste.

"See here, Dick, don't you go and ring in another pious fraud on me, not on your life! I reckon I've got to stand for another term of that man Hicks for governor; but I won't submit to any more of his stripe. I don't mind an out-and-out scamp; they're useful when you need 'em; but a sneaking hypocrite makes me sick. Hicks! Faugh! Why, Judas was steadfast and trustworthy, beside him. I won't stomach another one like him."

Dickman laughed. "Boltwood isn't the Hicks sort," he said, lightly. "I've known him for a good while. I went to school with him. He's always been ambitious, and is yet, but impractical, and all that, with no law-practice to speak of, and growing pretty shabby and disgruntled—just the sort they make reformers of. He's no hypocrite. He's honest enough, so far as he knows. But I've figured that if a little touch of prosperity should come to him he'd be a bit more cheerful about things, and—amenable to reason, if the reasoning wasn't too coarse. I'd like to try him."

The general manager pondered, his grave eyes intent upon the younger man's

face. "M-m-m!" he growled. "Don't get foolish. How are you going to work it?"

Dickman laughed again, with light unconcern. "I think I know. He won't know who's doing it, till it's done. He'll think it's a spontaneous uprising of 'the people.'"

"All right; go ahead," the other retorted, bluntly. "You're responsible for the details. If that's your judgment, I'll pass the word to the other headquarters, and you can talk it over with them."

With a curious air of elation, Dickman returned to his own room and called up one of his lieutenants by telephone.

"Jim, see if Boltwood's in town to-day, and then come down here, as soon as you can. There's something doing."

Ten days were gone, and again Dickman sat at work with his clippings. As he read, his ruddy face was in placid repose. The primaries for the State convention were only two weeks off, and the press reeked with it. Boltwood's name had become more and more conspicuous in the lists from day to day. The administration papers handled him with cautious lightness; but Dickman smiled contentedly over the country weeklies. They were loud in praise of this new candidate as a friend of the masses and a determined enemy of corporate-control in State affairs. This was as it should be.

A light step sounded along the marble corridor, and a light tap at his door. The door opened quietly, and a woman entered, pausing at the threshold. At sight of her, Dickman started to his feet, in sudden, conscious embarrassment; then went boldly to meet her, his hand outstretched.

"Why, Anne! I beg your pardon—Mrs. Boltwood. You surprised me into it. It's so long since I've had even a glimpse of you."

She gave him her hand for a moment, timidly, while her eyes met his fairly. He felt her hand tremble and read a vague trouble in her glance, though she was plainly doing her best to command composure.

"Come and sit down," he said. "Here, this is my best chair."

She took the place he offered, then sat



"I suppose you mean that I mustn't lie to you."

without a word, her head bent, her fingers playing idly with her handkerchief, while Dickman regarded her intently. She was a frail creature, almost colorless, and worn by worry to an appearance of age greater than her years; the exquisite neatness of her dress seemed to accentuate its poverty—a simple lawn, faded with long and constant service, and a hat which even a man could see was of a fashion that had been for some time out of favor with the modish. With all this, there was upon her a rare delicacy and grace that would have amounted to beauty under better nurture. Dickman's glance lingered upon her insistently. She raised her eyes to his suddenly—eyes limpid and frank as those of a child and carrying an expression of childlike cleanliness of mind, despite the gathering lines of care about them.

"Mr. Dickman," she said, presently, quite without preface, "I do not want my husband to have this office you are giving him."

Dickman caught his breath sharply, surprised, wondering. "You—What's that? I don't know—"

She grew more calm in the face of his evident confusion. "It's a good many years since I've asked any favor of you; but I must ask you to find another man for this place, please."

"I? Why, my dear woman!" He was striving to recover his mental balance, laughing his deep, rich laugh. "Why, what in the world made you think I've had anything to do with it? You're imagining vain things. Your husband is rated amongst our strongest opponents. He isn't of our party, even. He's a—"

"John!"

The intimate word, spoken very quietly, had instant effect upon him. Used as he was to *bravado*, and try as he would, he could not meet her calm, steadfast look. He got to his feet and moved with his strong stride to a window, where he stood with his hands plunged deep in his pockets, looking down upon the street. By-and-by he turned to confront her.

"I suppose you mean by that that I mustn't try to lie to you," he said. "I remember you didn't like a lie, in the old days."

She shook her head. "No, I would rather you didn't try. Besides, it would be of no use."

He took time to consider—a long time, it seemed to the woman who sat watching him as he paced back and forth between the desk and the window, his head bent, his strong, thick hands clasped tightly together at his back. Presently he flung himself into his chair, facing her, leaning toward her, his big arms outspread upon the desk, his eyes fixed upon hers with a look of bold challenge.

"All right!" he said. "I'm ready. I'll tell you the plain, bald truth, Anne, if—if you'll do the same by me."

She was hardly prepared for that, it seemed, for she stiffened perceptibly. "If I—" she stammered. "Why, what need is there for me—"

But he interrupted with a broad wave of his arm.

"I've grown out of the way of making one-sided bargains," he said. "It must be good, honest, straight talk between us, if we discuss the thing at all. That's only fair."

Their eyes encountered for a long minute; then her glance fell, as if in surrender, and his broad lips relaxed in a grim smile.

"Very well," she agreed, quietly. "What is it you want me to tell you?"

"I'll tell you, first," he returned. "You haven't lost any of your cleverness. If I hadn't been so self-centered about it, I might have known you'd see through it. I'm the man who has been pulling the strings for your husband's nomination."

"Yes!" she nodded, with an air of triumph curiously tempered by distress. "Yes, I was sure of it, almost from the very first."

He waited for her to go on, but she fell into a troubled silence. "Well?" he prompted.

"I have said all I came here to say," she returned. "I want you to find—somebody else. Please, John."

He laughed: a short, hard, metallic note without any mirth in it. "That sounds familiar," he said. "That's what you used to say to me, always and always. I reckon your attitude toward me hasn't changed very much, has it? See

here: I think likely I can say it for you. You don't know exactly what I'm after in this business, but you distrust me on general principles. Isn't that it? That's the bottom fact, isn't it?"

She was regarding him earnestly, appealingly, but in silence.

"Of course!" he cried. "You told me so, once, when—Oh, I haven't forgotten! My morals were too 'elemental,' you said. You didn't want that sort of a man, and so, you took him. Wait a minute! There's no need to show any acute feeling over it. I've got past that, long ago. I'm speaking of it now merely as a fact. You doubt me, don't you—my honesty, my integrity, my whole scheme of life, just as you used to?"

Still she did not speak, and after an intense moment of waiting he waived the need for an answer.

"All right; let it go at that. If you were to ask me, I'd have to tell you that I haven't changed much since those days, except that those peculiar morals of mine have grown older along with me—older and more hard-and-fast. I don't mind agreeing that you were clever and clear enough in your insight, in a hazy, general sort of way. I've never had any wire-drawn sensibilities; that's true enough. I've

been just blunt-minded and earthy-souled, with an eye always single to getting results—common, sordid, worldly results. That's all true. That's about the way you said it, when we talked the thing over that other time, when you told me how impossible I was, and what fine things you must find in your man. I've thought about it, now and then, at intervals. It was quite true. I don't believe you could say it any more plainly now, even with your riper understanding of life—and morals—could you?"

Watching her steadfastly with his trained eye he saw her wince, as if his words had carried a hidden sting. He settled himself easily in his chair, complacent, a quizzical curl upon his lips, in the manner of one whose cunning has succeeded. He was not moved to say any more just then, but sat with his gaze intently fixed upon her, studying her drooping posture, her pale, tremulous lips, the agitated movement

of her thin fingers as she plucked idly at a fold of her faded gown. He did not speak again until her constraint became painful.

"Well!" he cried, with an air of returning to a welcome footing on solid, matter-of-fact earth, "I hardly meant to say all that. But it's said, and we'll let



"Billy," he said, "how game are you?"

it stand. It's true. Now, about the other thing. Tell me this Anne: Does your husband suspect my hand in the matter?"

She shook her head without a word.

"No, of course not! I hardly needed an answer to that. It goes without saying that he doesn't guess. And you can't go to him as you've come to me—of course."

It was spoken very casually, as an obvious commonplace; but she flashed a quick, startled look upon him, her every faculty aroused, alert, searching for a covert meaning behind the mask of his words. If such meaning there was, he did not choose to let his manner confirm it; his face was in stolid repose, his eyes clouded, expressionless, inscrutable. After a moment she abandoned the effort at discovery, becoming again intent upon the fold of her skirt.

"No," she breathed, "I have not talked with him—of course."

"And you do not know exactly what I've had in mind in working for his nomination?"

"No. I haven't tried to find that out exactly."

"Ah! Then you are satisfied with knowing simply that I—"

She drew herself suddenly erect, with a little gesture of protest, a glint of temper shining from the depths of her eyes.

"Mr. Dickman, aren't we wasting time and words? It strikes me that this is all very labored and crude and in doubtful taste, under the circumstances. Can't we forego it, please?"

He did not permit himself to betray offense at the rebuff.

"As you will," he returned, lightly, with a dismissing wave of his big hand. "Now, let's see: Will you be kind enough to bring me back to the point you want to talk about?"

She laughed angrily. "You are merely playing with me now. Whatever your faults, *that* isn't like you. I have never before found you mean. I have asked what I want—that you will pick out another man in his stead. Will you do it?"

He made no further attempt to parry or parley. "I can't," he said, bluntly. "It's too late. The slate's made up and out of my hands."

As she sat looking at him, slowly her heat of temper passed, and she became again her frank, grave self.

"You can't?" she echoed. "I hoped you could—and would. It means a great deal to me, Mr. Dickman."

"I can believe that," he returned. "You wouldn't have come to me otherwise. But I'm telling you the truth. What you ask is beyond me, now. There's no way that I can see but for you to talk to him, and tell him what you know, and get him to withdraw his name."

She saw that further speech would avail nothing, and arose, drawing her worn glove over her thin wrist.

"I am sorry," she murmured. "I ought not have come at all. Pardon me if I've annoyed you. Good-by."

He returned the word formally, then sat watching her fixedly as she moved toward the door: watching through narrowed lids, his every feature of a wooden fixedness.

When she was gone, he sat for a long time, motionless, staring—staring as at a throng of memory's marshaled images. He threw himself back in his chair with a choking oath. Through his mask of stolidity there shone a quick, savage alertness, a vehement rage, an implacable exultation.

"Talk to him and get him to withdraw his name!" he muttered, deep in his throat, rolling the words with a sort of greedy relish. "But she won't go to him; she won't talk to him—not a syllable. That would be harder for her than the other."

His passion lifted him to his feet, and he began pacing the length of his room with slow, strong strides. This was not the Dickman of the jocund street-presence. The veins of his neck and temples were turgid, purple; his thick lips were drawn back from his teeth in a grimace of sheer, unbridled brutality. Only a very few of his political and official intimates knew this mood, and they never faced it willingly.

"I've been absolutely right about him!" he cried. "And she knows it now, better than I do. A poor, puny weakling, at the very heart of him, without a fiber in him that would bear an honest strain

—and she knows it! She's got to protect him against anything like a man's trial. She's found him out!"

With only a skillful dumb-show of opposition, and with every function of the State's political machinery working in his favor, with cunning hands on the concealed levers, Boltwood's election was a foregone "victory for the people," and as such the up-country press hailed it. The railroad-forces affected profound chagrin—in public. But it was otherwise at a private conference between Dickman and his general manager.

"I reckon you know your business, Dick," the older man conceded. "But don't let yourself forget that you've still got something to do. If you fall down now, it wont be pleasant for any of us, and least of all for you."

"Pshaw!" Dickman scoffed. "He's my meat, right this minute. He's fairly insane with his first taste of fat, after all those lean years. What do you think he'll be like when we dangle the governorship before his eyes, and then the senate? You rest easy."

On a January night the governor "received." He was a smug, self-righteous, shifty-eyed puppet, fit center of the throng assembled in the executive-mansion—State legislators, officers-elect, lobbyists, leeches, and barnacles of every sort and condition, who drifted about here and there, mingling together, practising what little they knew of the cruder amenities.

Boltwood, the only Fusionist member of the new administration, was an object of half-amused, half-wondering interest—a solemn-visaged, hungry-appearing man, flushed and excited by his sudden elevation from obscurity to a place of attention. Dickman, lounging easily about through the uneasy crowds, observed his man covertly, edging near enough now and again to catch stray scraps of the talk in the group surrounding Boltwood.

One theme was of dominant interest there, as throughout the room. Within a few days the State Tax Board would take a formal vote upon the question of increasing the assessment of the great rail-

roads. Knots of men were gathered in corners, discussing the probable outcome, tearing to shreds every floating rag of gossip. Two weeks before, the result had appeared assured beyond all question; but within the last day or two some doubtful rumors had got afloat, and tonight these were flying fleetly from lip to lip, in whispered undertones. A paragraph or two in the day's papers found free circulation—vague hints that the ambition of an unnamed newcomer in State affairs had waxed amazingly on short indulgence; that he was already daring to dream of a "career," and that this might easily imperil the issue. Such things had happened before, often and often. To-night, gossip was supplying the missing name, and credence seemed easier for the fact that the new figure was a party alien, a magpie amongst crows. The room was thick with hardly suppressed excitement; turn where he would, this was the talk Dickman caught. But he took no part in it, preserving a studied, smiling aspect of supreme indifference, as if concern over the matter were not for him.

But there was one figure in the room that drew his glance again and again, as the evening passed, holding his attention in spite of him: Mrs. Boltwood. She was an inconspicuous figure in the assemblage, keeping quietly in the background, almost unnoticed, taking no share in the buzzing attention bestowed upon her husband. She seemed glad of her obscurity, as if her own thoughts gave her occupation enough. And they were not pleasant thoughts, as Dickman's first glimpse of her face told him. She had grown noticeably older and more worn since the morning, a few months gone, when she had come to him at his office; her cheeks were hollow, her clear eyes shadowed.

Once, when his glance returned to her, he caught her by surprise, finding her regarding him fixedly, with a look he could not fathom. She turned away upon the instant, flushing; but the look haunted him. Twice, thrice, moved by no defined purpose, he sought to approach her, with affected want of intention; but each time she avoided the possibility of meeting him face to face. By-and-by he



The papers slipped unheeded from Dickman's grasp

gave it up and wandered out to the smoking-room, where he sat for half an hour, brooding over his cigar, repelling every advance of those who lounged in and out. Then, when his cigar was spent, deliberately he arose, and with impassive manner returned to the crowded reception room, sought one of his younger lieutenants and drew him quietly aside.

"Billy," he said, "how game are you—if I tell you I need you, bad?"

"Game?" Billy returned. "Oh, I'm always game—in the closed season."

He was still a mere youth, was Billy, with the fresh bloom not yet gone from his cheeks nor the ring of real gayety from his laugh; and he was a studious disciple of this master of political art. "What's on your mind, Dick?" he asked.

"You keep that pleasant smile on your face, while I'm telling you—in case anybody should be looking. I need you, son, as I haven't needed anybody since away back. It's about this Boltwood business—you know. I'm going to trust you, absolutely, as I haven't trusted anybody since I was old enough to know better; and what I tell you, you've got to lock in your soul and keep the lid down. I'm trusting you. You've got to handle this Boltwood thing for me."

"I? Oh, murder, Dick! I'm not big enough for that kind of a job."

"Wait a minute, now, and listen. It'll soon be over. What I want you to do is to go to him and tell him the whole blamed story, just as you know it—everything. I want you to make him understand that he's the most pitiable fool that ever stuck his head up."

"Dick! Why, what—" The boy could only stare. "What kind of a blazer is this, anyway?"

"It's no joke, Billy. I'm going to quit the game, and I'm going to give the wheel one swift whirl on my own hook before I quit. I've been playing at this racket about long enough—till I'm mortally weary, and fairly sickened by the corruption I've wrought. It's a poor trade for a man, son. I'm going to take you out

with me, understand? You're lots too fine a boy to rot your life out that way, as I've nearly rotted mine. You'll see what I mean, after awhile."

"Well, but—"

The startled youngster was groping for understanding.

"There's a woman in it, Billy," Dickman said, very quietly. "A woman who wants with all her soul to believe in this chap. I'll tell you about it, some time. He's a pretty weak sister, the way I've got him sized up; but that isn't the point, exactly. You've got to go to him in the morning and shoot the facts at him, just as you know them, and shock him so hard that he'll be bluffed or frightened into a sham sort of rectitude. We've got to do it, that's all."

The action of the Board had become history, and "the people" had won.

In the early Winter evening Dickman sat in a corner of the lobby of his hotel, running over the lurid headlines in the papers that chronicled the news with riotous superlatives. The popular cause had been saved, and Boltwood's name stood forth as that of its savior.

The sound of a woman's light, rippling laugh made Dickman raise his eyes. Boltwood and his wife were passing through the lobby to the dining-room, her hand resting upon his arm, a warm glow of color upon her thin cheeks, a strange new light in her clear eyes that were upturned to his face.

Dickman watched while they found places at a far table; then, faintly, he heard again the note of her happy laughter and saw her lean forward over the table and lay her hand for an instant upon that of her husband, in a light, tender caress.

The papers slipped unheeded from Dickman's grasp and he arose, lounged slowly to a window, and stood staring out upon the dim street. A deep-drawn, ragged sigh escaped him. "It's a funny proposition," he murmured, "this little life—a funny proposition!"



"Talk, Bishop, talk!"

The Road-House of Content

BY HOPKINS MOORHOUSE

Author of "Folly Stakes," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JAY HAMBIDGE

I

AN instant Watts stood stock still, then moved slowly to the edge of the curb dumbly staring. His shoulders straightened abruptly from the droop that had become habitual of late while the dull apathy that had lurked in his look fled like a ghost from his hollow cheeks. For one brief moment he wondered if this were not merely some abominable trick of vision, and quite mechanically pinched his fingers across the ache of his sunken eyes; but when he looked again he still saw that absurd little figure dodging and ducking across the crowded thoroughfare and knew

that it was actually "The Bishop." Of all others, the Bishop!—the same little pink-faced runt of a Bishop!—the snub-nosed, squint-eyed, commonplace little beggar!—little McGown, divinity '04, hero-worshiper!

With one reckless leap Watts was after him—Chesterfield Watts, one-time leader of college-debates, one-time editor of *Cap and Gown*, one-time bright and shining light of the 'Varsity Lit., one-time power and strength of the Areopagus Club, one-time everything!—H. C. Watts, seedy, unkempt, very homesick, utterly defeated! But that wouldn't make any difference with the Bishop. One slap on the back, one startled look of recogni-

tion, one chirp of unalloyed delight, and here, sure enough, the little duffer was, joyously pumping an arm off, pure grin all over the homely pink face of him!

That was the way of the meeting; while about them throbbed the pulses of the city—the roar of the elevated, the din of wheels, the unending shuffle of feet. Then straight off to "Mount Parnassus," up five flights of stairs Watts marched him, and in a dingy little bedroom off a dingy hall they broke loose at last in utter abandon, joked, laughed, talked—talked of things two years ago, of "the fellows" and a little Ontario university at the end of a maple-shaded drive, just beyond the lakes in the pretty little city of London-the-Less.

"Talk, Bishop! Talk!"

Watts smoothed out the threadbare counterpane and sprawled his gaunt length on the bed—lay there with hungry eyes that feasted on the animated chubbiness of little McGown, while that excited midget just talked and talked as if he were wound up tight and would never, never, run down, God bless him!

There was hair-brained Mac, who from the time he struck the college until he was expelled had never been altogether out of hot water; Mac had gone in for civil engineering—was some place out West and doing well, they said. There was Herb Follinsby, who took a "burl" at the newspaper-game, then worked his way across to Europe on a cattle-boat; he was taking post-graduate somewhere in Germany. Jimmy Davenport, who had always been sweet on Martha McAllister, had married that young lady as soon as he got into deacons' orders and was now out on the ragged edge of the diocese somewhere, living on six hundred a year with a load of hay thrown in for the horse. Gus Schneider, the stocky little German who had captured the athletic championship from the Meds. four years in succession—Gus was at Osgoode Hall with promise of becoming a criminal lawyer of note. Most of the girls had married; Tess Morrison had run away with a man old enough to be her father and Jennie Forrester had gone on the stage. The professors were still there, most of them—good old "Push" and the

Provost and "Crumple;" the "Doc." had gone back to Harvard for another term of economics or something of the sort. Great Scott! but there was no end of things to tell a fellow like Watts who had abruptly dropped through a hole in the earth and had been no more seen or heard of by any of the old crowd until this blessed minute! And the Bishop waded right into them, up to his neck in a steady flow of innocent gossip that was as one long refreshing drink to the lanky, homesick chap on the bed.

Two years before there had been a mob of fellows and a bevy of pretty girls at the old Grand Trunk depot up there at home; there had been streamers of purple and black tied in buttonholes, tied to parasols; there had been much noise and a great deal of laughing and a rousing send-off with a warm God-speed beneath the racket of it; and all this because a brilliant and popular young man whose name was Chesterfield Watts, was setting forth from his *alma mater* to conquer the world with a pen.

A vision of it all came back to him now as he sprawled there on the bed and listened to the boyish chatter of the good little Bishop, and it turned him sick. To conquer the world with a pen! A fat lot of conquering he had done! The vision of that send-off was by no means new; it had haunted him remorselessly and it had always turned him sick like this. Back of all the suffering and hardships it had loomed a constant whip and spur against the barrier of his defeat, both a goad and a mockery.

He had his stars to thank that he had stumbled across the Bishop when he did. Any of the others he would have shunned with shame; but as for the Bishop—why, the Bishop was only a commonplace little son-of-a-gun whose beaming blue eyes behind his big specs could see nothing but good in the world about him; whose motto had always been, "What is life for if not to make living less difficult for one another?" Who would marry coy Winnie Stanley, if he had not already done so, and become a commonplace little clergyman, wearing a rusty black coat, in a commonplace little country parish with oyster-suppers and harvest-

homes for his excitements and a little parsonage with a brick walk running out to the dusty road between fragrant cedar hedges; and who would have a place on his lawn for a tennis-court and croquet that the young people of the village might amuse themselves; and there he would live happily and do good on six hundred a year with a load of hay thrown in for the horse—What?

Little McGown had grown suddenly

self, I shall receive promotion and become a full-fledged clerk."

Watts wetted his lips.

"Bishop, are you telling me the truth?" But the mild reproach in the eyes of him answered that and Watts dropped back weakly on the pillow. "Oh, well!" he gasped. "But I thought you were appointed to a curacy at some church near St. Thomas," he objected quickly. "Didn't you go through the min-



The Bishop began to read

very grave and was sadly shaking his head.

"I am afraid, Harold," he repeated patiently, "that I shall never go back now—that is, of course, except maybe for a visit once in a long while."

Watts propped himself on an elbow and stared.

"You don't mean—Why, you're not here in New York to stay?" he cried in astonishment.

"I am working in one of Ryan's shoe-stores," nodded little McGown. "I help sweep out in the mornings and—and carry messages. Some day, if I mind my-

istry and didn't you—Aw, get out, Bishop, you're joking!"

"If I only were, Harold!" sighed the Bishop disconsolately. "But not so. I am truly in earnest. I wanted to be a minister; yes, I had set my heart on it. I still want to. I studied hard enough for it, too—you know that."

"Then for goodness' sake—" began Watts.

He stopped abruptly as he saw that little McGown was blinking hard at a crack in the linoleum.

"For one thing, I—I don't look well in the pulpit, Harold, and I—I squint."

Oh, there were other things besides. The Bishop had been trying to forget it all, for the subject was painful to him; and when he spoke of these things now, he spoke of them quietly because of the hurt. It was true that he had been a curate for awhile near St. Thomas; he had entered the work as a young man of good intentions and much hope, though a very young man indeed. That seemed to be what had caused all the trouble—the fact that he was too full of life and wanted too much fun to suit the long-faced element of the parish. Once he had played ball with the St. Thomas nine—it was the year the St. Thomas "fans" were crazy about the game—and he had worn yellow socks. He had not played very well and the little "tin-horn" papers had "roasted" him unmercifully and poked fun at his yellow socks and the fact that he was a "parson;" said if he wasn't a better preacher than he was a ball-player, he'd better "take to the tall grass," and there were those who represented this sort of publicity.

Then there was the time he picked up a drunken Indian, who had wandered away from the reservation at Muncie-town and whom he found lying beside the road. He had had trouble with his horse this time; so that they went lickety-scoot through the town quite late on a Saturday night, the redskin kicking up a tremendous row and whooping at the top of his voice: "Heap bad Injun! Drink whisky! Wow! Wow!"

"I know I should not have done such a disgraceful thing, Harold," the Bishop confessed with a faint blush. "I know it was very wrong and very unseemly; but I was so angry at the injustice of it all that—I just up and told the whole crowd to go to the devil!"

Watts' right fist went into his left palm with a smack.

"Good for you!" he roared.

He laughed till the tears stood in his eyes.

Not so with little McGown: the part that hurt most had yet to be told. Winnie Stanley, to whom he had been engaged for nearly two years, sent him back his ring when she heard the stories and refused even to grant him a chance to ex-

plain. The Bishop was blinking harder than ever at the crack in the linoleum as he told that and Watts, staring his amazement at this unexpected news, felt a sudden surge of indignation.

"I always said that girl wasn't worth —"

"Stop! Watty, don't you dare say it again!"

The Bishop suddenly hid his burning face in his hands.

For a moment Watts looked at him. He got up presently and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Bobby, old fellow, forgive me," he said soberly. "You're harder hit than I thought and I'm sorry. I—Why, I hadn't any idea you knew anything about this sort of thing—the knocks, that is. It's a dirty mean shame, that's what! But they're only a lot of corner-grocers at criticism back there and they don't know any better; so it really isn't worth bothering about. As for the other—it's not for me to talk about that; it's all in the game, Bobby. Life keeps a fellow pretty much with his nose in his book; we only begin to learn things when we quit the schools. Since I started out, I've learned a whole lot of things that are not in the curriculum of any university in the world except the University of Up-Against-It, where the principal study is Bumpology and kindred subjects. I've been living in hell!"

The Bishop glanced up quickly, wide-eyed at his intensity. Watts laughed mirthlessly.

"Bah! Bishop, what do they know about it back there where the birds twitter in the trees and the chapel-bell is never done ringing? They tell us when we leave college that there are in life two things worth looking for—the True and the Beautiful! Perhaps some of us find them; others of us struggle along for a time and perhaps think we have found them, or something 'just as good,' and we lie down to await the end; still others of us wander from hamlet to hamlet and from town to town without sighting either. And then in the evening, maybe, when we have come out into a broad, cool field, far away from the towns and marts where we have been soiled and

hurt, where we have borne and suffered, we do find the True and the Beautiful; and as our tired eyes close in sleep, we wonder why it was that we looked so late in the green pastures."

The Bishop nodded again slowly.

"I came here, Bishop," Watts continued presently, "to write a novel, as you know. I was to become a famous author—wonder of wonders! You all said so. I said so, too, in my heart! Well," he laughed shortly, "I have written it, the wonderful novel; it has been to every publisher in New York and it has come back from every publisher in New York but one; it will come back from that one any day now. I am very much afraid, Bishop, that I have succeeded only in proving myself a very choice specimen of the genus, 'Fool.'"

"Tut, tut! You are not far from being one, Harold, when you go talking like that!" remonstrated little McGown severely.

Watts laughed again mirthlessly.

"I'll grant you there's always the hope to drive a fellow on," he said bitterly. "I worked hard on that book—put my very soul into it. How I've worked—worked morning, noon, night—robbed my sleep—starved my body—worked till my fingers were numb squeezing a pencil, my brain buzzing, my nerves frayed to a dangle so that I could have hollered out loud! Oh, you don't know—nobody knows but myself! And all this because I believed in myself. I still do. I'm trying to look away off into the future where the gleam is wobbling, wobbling. It used to look like the reflection of a warehouse-fire: but of late it has somehow dwindled down so that it flickers like a little firefly and gutters like a burnt-out lamp-wick. It would not take much to put it out altogether and then there would be nothing to show for it all but a very disagreeable smudge!"

Watts leaned forward suddenly, earnestly.

"Bishop," he said, "I'm looking for a place they call the Roadhouse of Content. It belongs to the Things of To-morrow, and it lies ahead somewhere beyond the purple ridges yonder, in the Valley of Dreams. In that Valley are many won-

derful things, Bishop—the Fountain of Yesterday and the Cave of Blasted Hopes; and when what lies in that Cave has been routed out, there is the Spring of Realization. There is no storm there; only sunshine and flowers and babbling streams—Oh, Crackers and Cheese!"

Watts laughed.

"But there is one thing, Bishop, which we can have, all the way along the rocky trail, and that is Friendship. It's the only pearl to our oyster, old man. Don't you see that it is? Equal in feeling makes us equal in all. So let's travel together and we'll hunt for that Roadhouse till we find it—you and I—and when we do, we'll build an enormous bright and snapping fire in the open grate and bask there and purr till the cows come home and the sheep are separated from the goats. That is to say, in the words of the poet, move your trunk up here and we'll room it together. It'll help a whole lot, old man. Don't you think so?"

"Sure!" grinned the Bishop. "Sure it will! And it will be much cheaper, too, Harold," he added with enthusiasm.

So it was arranged that way.

II

The next two weeks jogged by, uncolored by any special event. In the morning, little McGown trotted off to his work in the shoe-store and in the evening he returned; Watts remained behind to write or went out to walk the streets and watch the life about him, or play his fiddle. One night they went to the theatre—the Bishop's treat. The change brought congenial companionship to both and was welcome accordingly.

Watts played his fiddle when he felt like it, and he felt like it most when he was feeling blue. Not for worlds would little McGown have said that Watts could not play very well at any time, though the suspicion haunted him just the same; and there were times, when the fiddle cried and wailed so mournfully, that the Bishop wanted to take an axe and smash it to smithereens. It made him homesick.

But this phase of the matter was of



"Bish!" he cried boisterously"

little moment; as the days passed one by one, it was rather what lay behind these mournful tunes that began to give the good little fellow concern. He had not been living with Watts for more than a week before he became conscious of something elusively unnatural in his friend's manner; despite all efforts to put a little

the Bishop merely put his foot on it and waited for an opportunity to slip it unobserved into his pocket. Neither did he say anything the night he came home with the watch in his vest, deeming it much wiser to quietly hide the timepiece in his own little trunk. The same with Watts' ring. The same with Watts' gold cuff-links, those his mother had given him a long time ago, with a bit of coral set in the center of them.

Then one day the novel came back—came back with the usual letter of regrets from the very last publisher in New York.

When the Bishop reached home that evening he found Watts rather more cheerful than he had been for some time; at least, he was more talkative and laughed a little as he pointed to the package of manuscript.

"Well, Bishop, as old 'Push' used to say: *'Writere-exami-pluckem.'* The cat's come back for the last time, and it's rather a relief, too; this everlasting waiting to hear your fate gets on a fellow's nerves. I suppose it's part of every man's make-up to hang onto a hope, no matter how forlorn, until the very last minute. But I know where I am now. I've failed. Hear that, Bishop? I've failed!" he cried hoarsely.

"Why — why, nonsense, Harold!" stammered little McGowen, alarmed at his vehemence. "I don't believe that—not a word of it."

"Bah! Bishop, what's the use? What's the use of trying to deceive ourselves?" demanded Watts with a gesture of disgust. "The world is old and falling to pieces. Nothing is but was, and it was better then; nothing will be but is, and it will grow worse. To-night I feel like a dog that can't find a place to lie down. If I were Edgar Allan Poe, I'd go out and get drunk; but my name is only Watts



"Watts might pull through"

fun into him, Watts was growing more moody every day, once the novelty of the Bishop's presence began to wear off, and it worried the Bishop quite a bit.

Having a due appreciation of the sensitive natures of some long-legged beings, McGowan took good care to be surreptitious in his surveillance. The night he discovered that Watts had lost his gold watch, he wisely said nothing at all; and when, a little later, Watts inadvertently dropped a pawn-ticket on the floor,

and the tragedy of that is the joy of having a friend—a friend like you, Bishop."

"Harold!" cried the Bishop, aghast.
"You're talking through your hat!"

"Oh, you needn't look so confoundedly shocked, Bish. I mean all this to-night—every word. I contend that to no man can belong more than will hold his bones; yet the world goes raving mad over appropriation! It's enough to make you sick! Why, the first thing we know, somebody will be climbing up to the moon, planting a flag on it, and spoiling our moonlight nights by charging us so-much-per through a meter for an hour with the girl."

Watts sat down suddenly on the edge of the bed, his lean jaws set with a new determination.

"Bishop, I'm going to pull out of here. My money's all gone and the game's up. I'm going West—"

He fell back on the bed.

III

The fever came next day. The Bishop was feeling very tired as he climbed the five flights of stair to their room that evening; but when he opened the door he promptly forgot everything in the scene that met his startled gaze. The air was rank with cigaret-smoke; the room was in disorder, littered with papers and dirty with tobacco-ashes and many burnt matches; a whisky bottle stood on the trunk, alongside Watts' old typewriter. A glance revealed these things; but it was the sight of Watts himself that made the Bishop start back in sudden dismay—Watts in his shirt-sleeves, hair rumpled, cheeks flushed, eyes blood-shot!

"Bish!" he cried boisterously, as he caught sight of the other's frightened face in the doorway. He yanked a sheet of paper from the machine and waved it triumphantly over his head as he got unsteadily to his feet. He caught the lapel of the Bishop's coat and pulled agitatedly. His long, thin hand trembled as he pointed.

"Last three chapters," he shouted excitedly. "all wrong—wrong ending, boy! Whole thing spoiled—wrong end-

ing! But she's fixed now, you old lumix! —can't reject her now, 'cause—'cause she's *fixed!*—can't—"

What followed happened in an eye-wink. Watts' hands went quickly to his throbbing temples and he crumpled all at once to a heap on the floor. The Bishop sprang for him, white and terrified. Panic-stricken, he struggled to lift the inert form to the bed; then out into the hall he flew and down the stairs, half-falling as he went. He stopped long enough on the lower landing to telephone the nearest doctor; then he was off down more stairs till he clammed into the basement and poured out his trouble into the ready ear of good Mrs. O'Malley, the landlady. Then back up ten thousand steps, stumbling and jumping, wild-eyed and panting, little McGown hurried, while far below but coming as fast as she could was the buxom Mrs. O'Malley.

When the doctor arrived he at once administered a hypodermic. Fever, super-induced by overwork and poor nourishment was his diagnosis. The patient was too ill to be removed to the hospital; his illness might last six weeks, maybe not quite that long. In the meantime—super-alimentation—broths and careful nursing.

The Bishop sat up all that night, anxiously watching, and listening to the vagaries of delirium. It was late when he went to his work. So it was, too, on the day following. On the third morning another had his place. But he scarcely gave this a thought, except that he could now devote all his time to the patient and get a little rest himself. He had some money saved up—not a great deal, but some.

It was "slow" fever, the doctor said, and the Bishop settled himself without a murmur to the new order of things. He made an excellent nurse, and after the first few visits the gruff old physician's eye kindled with approval. To the Bishop's whispered anxiety out in the dingy hall one morning, he vouchsafed the non-committal opinion that Watts might pull through all right and again, he might not.

Not until several mornings after this did little McGown turn his attention to the manuscript of the novel. His patient

was resting quietly, and to pass the time, the Bishop began to read. He finished it in the early afternoon with eyes bright and cheeks glowing with enthusiasm. It was great! He knew it was great—simply great! The altogether unexpected and wholesome *dénouement* fairly swept him off his feet. It was bully! Poor old Watty! You bet he had it in him!

Then the Bishop made a decision and acted on it without delay. He would take the manuscript himself to a publisher and when Watts came to his senses again, there would be the glorious news that would do more to restore him than anything else in the world. So the Bishop took the manuscript that very afternoon to the biggest publisher in the metropolis.

It was the first of many such trips for little McGown. During the next two weeks he carried the precious package into the holy places, only to carry it out again. He haunted offices, looked through brass-barred wickets, sat in leather chairs that threatened to swallow him utterly, and ever he wistfully watched the doors that led to sacred interiors open and shut, open and shut. And at last, in spite of his optimism, he was forced to acknowledge that he had somehow failed; the biggest publisher did not want the manuscript; the littlest publisher of all would not even look at it, and the Bishop went back perplexed and dejected, but hugging it under his arm; for he knew that it was great.

It was not alone that the result of his efforts to dispose of the story was a keen disappointment; its failure after the revision might have serious effects upon Watts in his weakened state, and that it was a failure, an utter failure, could not long be hid from the eagerness of a suddenly renewed hope.

The Bishop was very much worried about it.

About this time, too, he suddenly awoke to the knowledge that his money was all but gone. He counted it carefully several times and found only six dollars and forty-five cents left. But in the worry of this other, it seemed rather a small matter to him. Mrs. O'Malley was too Irish to turn them out if the rent ran behind a couple of weeks, and when little

McGown had written home to his sister an urgent request for a hundred dollars, he dismissed finance from his thoughts and went back to the more important matter.

Watts was beginning to improve slowly. The crisis of his illness was passing, his wild delirium had left him and he rested more quietly than he had for weeks, sleeping the greater part of the time. Barring a relapse, he would pull through all right, the doctor thought.

But a relapse was exactly what the Bishop was dreading. He knew that one of these fine mornings Watts would awake more fully to the world about him; so that while little McGown busied himself in coaxing back the strength of the patient's emaciated body, he daily grew more and more apprehensive of the inevitable questions and racked his brains for ways and means to postpone them. But he could think up only one possible solution and that he discarded at once as both impracticable and reprehensible.

The idea, nevertheless, kept bobbing back upon him. It was still in his head the morning Watts did awake more fully to the world about him and asked weakly if the corrected manuscript were safe. The Bishop rose manfully to meet the emergency and told his little lie without hesitation; it was being reconsidered at one of the publisher's, he said. It was the first time he had ever in his life told a falsehood glibly and he experienced a vague sort of surprise at the accomplishment. But he was too much relieved at its success and too full of the crisis at hand to think of moral ethics; rather was it a time for action, reprehensible or not.

So, waiting until the patient had gone to sleep again, he got out the sundry letters of rejection that had come from the various editors and read them over carefully. He selected an autograph-letter which seemed to be more gently worded than any of the others—a letter, signed by one W. D. Holling—and with this in his pocket sallied forth once more, his friend's manuscript under his arm and his blue eyes alight with a new determination.

The publishing-house to which he di-



He earnestly poured forth his trouble

rected his steps was one of the most reputable in America. Its inner sanctum was most jealously guarded, a fact which the Bishop had discovered just the week before. As he soared upward in the elevator he speculated on the possibilities of a row before he came down again; he abominated rows, but he was bound for the inner sanctum of the Editor-in-chief himself and he intended to get there. If there was to be trouble, he knew it would have a burly front with red hair, a heavy brusque voice, and a cold, calculating eye.

Therefore he asked at once for the associate-editor, and a moment later was ushered in with only one door between him and his destination. At a desk, piled high with manuscripts, sat a man whose red hair was badly rumpled, and when this Guard of the Sanctum looked up, it was to glance suspiciously at the package

under the caller's arm and to frown with recognition and annoyance.

"Well, what is it?" he demanded. "Something new there? Or is it the same stuff you brought in last week? If it is—"

"It is the same—stuff," said the Bishop with dignity. "I would like to see Mr. Holling, please."

"Sorry. Mr. Holling is busy."

"Then I'll wait, if you don't mind," said little McGown, helping himself to a seat.

The associate-editor's frown deepened perceptibly.

"It will be useless to do that. Mr. Holling cannot possibly see you to-day. Besides we are not in the habit of reading the same manuscripts three times over, once we have rendered a decision. Good-day, sir!"

The Bishop shut his small white teeth together and sat where he was.

"What's the row, Gray?"

The inner door had opened quietly and the Bishop turned to find a white-haired old gentleman smiling in on them with undisguised amusement.

"Oh, Mr. Holling, I would like to see you, please, sir, for just half a second! It's important. It's a matter of life and death, sir!"

By the time he got this out, little McGown had scooted clean across the room and through the door into the sanctum beyond. He fancied he heard a chuckle behind him; but when the old gentleman had closed the door, there was only gentle courtesy in his manner.

Yes, Mr. Holling remembered the story. He had examined it personally several weeks ago, he said, and regretted very much that they could not see their way clear to accepting it. Mr. Gray had informed him that it had come back again last week—

"And it wasn't read!" interrupted the Bishop eagerly. "I'll bet a cookie it wasn't! It's been revised—"

"So Mr. Gray informed me." He smiled tolerantly. "We seldom let anything get away from us that we can possibly use; because then the other fellow might get it, you know. But we really do not want this manuscript. We shall be very glad, however, to see more of your friend's work; you may tell him that. And now, if that is all—" He turned to his papers. "I am very busy to-day, you see."

He smiled again kindly, this time in dismissal.

Instantly little McGown was on his feet. But he was not ready to be dismissed. Instead, he leaned over the great editor's desk and hurriedly, earnestly, poured forth his trouble—spoke of Watts, his struggle with poverty, his sickness, the crisis that had been reached and the fatal relapse that threatened unless some word of cheer were forthcoming regarding this story on which his mind so persistently dwelt.

"I am very sorry," and there was sincerity in the old editor's tones. "I am very sorry indeed. But you must surely see that even under these circumstances, we could not accept—"

"But a letter or something—Couldn't you write him a letter, pretending to accept it? That's what I came to ask you to do. Then when he was out of danger, you could write another letter, saying you'd changed your mind and—"

"Im—possible!" The old gentleman fairly gasped. "Well, 'pon my soul! Why—why! sir, it would be a piece of rank imposition, sir!"

"Sure it'd be a lie! But it'd have white wings and it'd fly straight to Heaven! I'd tell a million such lies, Mr. Holling, and I'd go straight to Heaven, too, when I died. You needn't be afraid!"

W. D. Holling smiled faintly, then frowned at his soft white fingers that were drumming out perplexity on the polished surface of the desk. The Bishop leaned still farther toward him and spoke as if he were having trouble with something in his throat.

"I know," he began. "I know what you're thinking, sir. You're thinking I'm a blessed little fool. Well, mebbe I am, Mr. Holling; mebbe I have a mind like a peanut and can't see things straight. I don't claim to have any strangle-hold on Wisdom; but I do know something about Faith, Hope, and Charity and I know that poor old Watty has had a bigger dose of Faith and Hope than was good for him. It has made him sick, that's what, and I'm out looking for the third ingredient for an antidote—a little Charity, the common sort you can't buy, the kind that's given away. So I came to you because your letter, rejecting that story, was the letter of a human being."

"The world has a mighty ugly habit of getting along without a fellow, Mr. Holling, especially if he's anyway down on his luck. It's been that way with Watts. You can't know what that story has meant to him. His whole soul's wrapt up in it! He's sweat blood over it! It's what has put him on his back and since he's been there he's been raving nothing but book!—book!—book!—those sheets of manuscript, there. It was the first thing he spoke about when he came to his senses this morning. He's as weak as a cat and I daren't tell him it has been refused already by every one of you publishers in spite of the corrections he be-



"Bish! Bish!"

lieves in so implicitly. It would kill him, That's what!

"And that's why I've got to have this letter to tide him over till he's strong enough to bear the truth. I know it's against all business-rules; but you can easily wiggle out of it afterwards. If you like, I'll sign a statement to show that the whole thing's a put-up job of my own. But for God's sake, sir, please help us out on this! Wont you *please* do it?"

The old editor's eyes shifted slowly to the ridiculously small hand that was clasping the edge of the desk so tightly that the knuckles showed white. He suddenly became aware that the little fellow was trembling from head to foot in an agony of suspense, and looking up quickly, saw that the blue eyes were full of tears which the suppliant was bravely trying to blink away.

"Well, 'pon my soul!" murmured W. D. Holling.

He hastily pulled out his pocket-handkerchief and blew his nose. He drew a letter-pad towards him, dipped his pen in the ink and scratched quickly for a moment.

"Will that do?"

"Do!" cried the Bishop when he had eagerly read it over.

"Do!"

He seized the other's hand and beamed delight through his tears.

"Mr. Holling, you're—Say, you're all right!" he blurred out shakily.

For some time after the door had closed behind his visitor, the great editor sat staring out of the window with unseeing eyes.

At last he took off his glasses and wiped them thoughtfully.

"Well, 'pon my soul!" he murmured again.

Impulsively, he reached for the manuscript.

Three days later, when the doctor called at Mrs. O'Malley's boarding-house, he found Mr. Robert McGown waiting for him with his usual cherubic countenance clouded over with trouble. He produced a sealed envelope which had arrived that morning from the publisher's. It was addressed to H. C. Watts.

The doctor merely nodded comprehen-

hension and went up-stairs. The metamorphosis which the past three days had wrought in his patient had been nothing short of a miracle. From the moment that the Bishop had waltzed excitedly in upon him with the editor's letter, accepting his novel, Watts had been a new being; it was the most radical change for the better within the doctor's thirty years' experience, and a skimpy five lines of writing had done it!

But if to Watts the three days had been days of jubilation, to little McGown they had been a nightmare of misery. Before his sick friend he had preserved the same bright, enthusiastic front; but even while he laughed and chattered, his whole small being was filled with a nausea of remorse at the wretched sham of it all.

His ruse had indeed succeeded beyond all expectations; but its very success was now his greatest apprehension. Now that the second letter had come to shatter the hopes which the first had aroused, the Bishop waited in a torture of trepidation for the doctor's verdict as to whether the patient was strong enough to stand the shock. It had all been such a miserable mistake—such a despicable mistake!

"God forgive me!" he muttered when the doctor at last stuck his head out the door and nodded. "God help him!" Sum-

moning all his control, he rushed into the little bedroom.

"Oh, say, Watty, old man!" he cried. "If here isn't another one! It'd be just like the bloomin' luck if the old duffer had changed his mind about accepting the novel, eh?" He laughed unnaturally.

"What's that you say?"

Watts snatched the envelope from the other's trembling fingers and frantically ripped it open.

A letter and a long folded paper fell out upon the coverlet.

"Bish — Bish, you pug-nosed little son-of-a-sea-cook! How—how you do like to scare a fellow!" he laughed weakly, and shook the letter derisively.

DEAR MR. WATTS:

This is simply to confirm my note of the 14th instant regarding your novel, "The Roadhouse of Content." It will appear shortly as a serial in "Holling's Magazine," after which it will be published in book form. Enclosed please find contract for signature and our check for \$400 on account of serial rights. With sincere congratulations on your merited suc-

cess, Yours faithfully, W. D. HOLLING.

The Bishop's jaw fell, his shoulders fell, his arms fell, limp. Then, with the whoop of a wild Indian, he suddenly jumped upon a chair, flapped his arms at his side, stretched his neck and crowed for all the world like a jolly little rooster.



Crowed like a jolly little rooster



"I'm going to be a better man in future, Bill!"

The Opium Dealers

BY ALBERT DORRINGTON

Author of "The Salting of Skull Rock Light," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM MOLT

THURSDAY ISLAND.

DEAR HAYES:

The Chinaman, Kum Sin, is due at Emu Creek early this month. He chartered a bull-headed junk from a firm of schooner-breakers in Sourabaya. His manifest shows some silk-trade and fancy notions for the islands. Somewhere between the garboard strake and the bulkhead partition are fifty or sixty packets of Indian opium—government stuff—not mentioned in his bill of lading. I don't think you've got a chance with Kum Sin unless you place him between two cooking-fires and pile on the wood—and that isn't your way of dealing with the silent, opium-smuggling chow. Times are hard, Hayes; pearl is selling at three hundred dollars a ton. Kum Sin's little *cache* of opium would be worth five thousand. Try for it, and don't forget that I expect a commission.

BARNEY MCKEE.

HAYES handed the letter to his first mate, Bill Howe, and sighed wearily.

"McKee's right," he said, when the mate had finished reading it by the bin-

nacle light. "I wouldn't put a chow between two fires. Not me!"

"You aint that kind of man," agreed the mate, handing back the letter. "You had a chance last year, in Samoa, to burn down Willy Ah King's place, and you didn't."

"There's no sense in lighting up a Chinaman's store these times," grumbled the buccaneer. "It leads to all sorts of unpleasantness."

"But you threw a blazing tar-barrel into Sam Lee's trade-house at Nukahiva, cap'n," declared the mate, with a sudden change of manner. "It was a terrible burst-up! You never suspected that he had dynamite stored inside. The explosion turned the consul's hair green, and we had to put to sea without stores."

"We all make mistakes," admitted the buccaneer sadly. "It happened in my salad-days, when the sight of a Chinaman tearing across a burning roof with his cash-box under his arm appealed to me."

Hayes paced the narrow deck in silence, his eyes wandering over the distant sand-hills, where the lazy town sprawled from the pier to the edge of the mangrove-skirted creek.

"I'm going to be a better man in future, Bill," he added somberly. "No more Chinese bonfires, no more vermillion nights. I'm going to try modesty and forbearance. There's no sense in yelping round the world persuading mule-headed consuls I am honest. No one ever believed me. And if I forget to hold up a cargo-tramp occasionally, or bully some poor old French gunboat, people say I'm losing my nerve."

"They do, cap'n," nodded the mate.

"It's a blamed lot harder to be a coward in these parts than it is to steal a nine inch gun from the deck of a British cruiser. I'm sick of being brave; one of these days I'll run away from some blatherskitting, ten-stone Dutchman just to show that I don't value public opinion."

"They'd say you were luring him into a quiet place to raise a hundred dollars from him," added the mate slowly. "That's what they'd say."

"Of course they would," grunted Hayes. "It's a terrible thing to live down your reputation. And assuming," he went on, "that the ten stone Dutchman didn't part up the hundred dollars, it would be hard to persuade him that it wasn't me who had bumped his forehead on the footwalk and flattened the curb with his face."

"He'd never believe you, cap'n," said the mate earnestly. "nor anybody else."

Hayes brightened suddenly. "Makes me feel good to think that I've bumped a few nasty heads in my day. Still, I intend living a reasonable life in future. I'll leave Chinamen alone. I'll keep to my own schooner and give shore-life a rest."

Three days after the above conversation, a big, squat vessel, half-junk and schooner-rigged, hove like an unclean bird, across the mouth of the inlet. She was manned by Tonquinese and Malays, lazy-eyed rascals more accustomed to the ways of a swiftly sailing *prau* than the slow, wind-shuffling junk-schooner.

Captain Hayes, loafing on the pier at Emu Creek, observed her closely, and after a brief survey of her villainous crew decided to wait until she was berthed alongside the pier before paying his respects to her captain.

Night comes swiftly along the jungled seaboard of North Queensland. Darkness fell before the vigilant pearl-luggers and trepang-dredgers could hang out their riding-lights. The pier was almost deserted save for the solitary customs-official wandering occasionally up and down.

It was nearly midnight before Hayes ventured on the pier. Halting at the foot of the junk's rickety gangway he whistled a peculiar melody familiar to every pearl-thief and opium-smuggler west of Torres.

There was no reply from the junk's interior; her ancient timbers creaked and whined as the tide lifted and bruised her sea-worn shoulders against the piles.

"Ahoy there! Anybody aboard?"

The buccaneer paused, his foot on the greasy gangway, and listened. A prolonged snore came from the depths of the fo'c'sle, followed by a slavering sound, as if a thick fluid were being drawn through the stem of a pipe. An oil-lamp flickered dully under the bamboo stays, where cases of fruit and smoked trepang lay piled in great disorder. An odor of sun-dried dugong lingered in the air.

Peering for'd Hayes was conscious of two moon-colored eyes watching him from the heaped-up garbage. The clink of a chain broke the silence; a muffled snarl seemed to run along the deck, while the chain thrashed violently against a restraining cleat.

The buccaneer retreated nimbly down the gangway, and paused a moment as the head of a black bear lolled over the junk's side, watching him intently.

"Phew!"

Stooping suddenly he picked up a piece of ballast stone, lying on the pier, and hurled it at the moon-colored eyes.

The chain rattled loudly, but the black head vanished with magic brevity. In its place appeared the swart Mongolian captain, naked to his loin-cloth. He re-

garded the buccaneer with a drowsy, inquisitive eye.

"Wha' fo you tlow blicks at my bear?" he demanded icily.

"To hit him," breathed Hayes. "He nearly bit me."

"You go 'way un' leave um bear alone!" The wrathful voice of the Chinese captain fell shrilly upon the hot silence. "Him no bitee if you takee your legs off my ship. Go 'way."

"If you say anything about my legs and where they ought to be," thundered Hayes, "I'll turn your blamed junk into a scrap heap."

The pigtailed head vanished swiftly down the fo'c'sle-stairs; the chain clinked and rattled as if the bear was trying to follow the Chinese captain below.

Hayes returned to the town and entered a dingy, half-lit shanty kept by a German whisky-seller named Schultz. A crowd of divers and shell-openers were playing dice over the counter.

Everybody gaped at sight of the buccaneer standing in the doorway. Schultz wiped the counter and put away the glasses with sudden energy.

"Boys," Hayes smiled genially, "don't mind me. I'm not drinking."

"There's some champagne at five dollars a bottle, cap'n. We'll be glad if you'll join us," said one earnestly.

"No, boys, not to-night. I'm turning over a new leaf. Drinking leads to a sore head and only spoils your nerve. I want to make the town laugh to-night, boys. I want to make it feel innocent and young; I want it to put aside its unholy thirst and play with a bear."

"Oh, say, Bully, you've been lyin' in the wet. You've seen things walking up your coat. Try some whisky, it'll wear off."

"My bear wont, boys. It's got a chain and it's fastened to the big iron cleat on Kum Sin's junk." Hayes regarded the crowd sorrowfully. "I didn't think you boys would let a Chinese circus come into port without providing it with some music."

The pearl-shellers and *bêche-de-mer* fishers, who ply their calling on the northern limits of Australia, are laugh-

terless and sullen by nature. The business of scouring the sea-floor in quest of shell among the giant reef-eels and carpet-sharks of Torres Straits is not conducive to high spirits and the making of jests. But at that moment each man felt called upon to display a certain interest in the bear chained on board Kum Sin's evil-smelling vessel.

"Ef we could get it into the bar," ventured one, "we could give it beer until it made the right kind of noise."

"You vill nod pring a pear indo my bar," protested the German proprietor. "Id vas nod a licensed menagerie."

"Oh, we don't want to poison the creature, Dutchy," broke in another. "He aint done us no harm."

"Tell you what, boys," Hayes wiped his brow thoughtfully, "first we'll get the bear, then we'll walk it round to Hung Chat's gambling-den and lower it through the roof on to the big table where the money is piled. And the man who follows the bear will be able to wash his hands in English gold and American dollars."

In ten seconds the bar was deserted. Outside, the crowd collected in a silent group and proceeded towards the pier.

"Say, Hayes," cried someone, "what variety of bear is it? Not one of them Yankee buffalo-eaters, eh?"

"No," drawled the buccaneer. "It smelt like the black Indian species, the sort that roots out honeycomb and oversets jam-pots. Now, if we had a beehive, boys, we could drop it into Kum Sin's fo'c'sle. You can't beat a swarm of black Italian bees for cleaning out a crowd of dirty Chinkies and Malays."

The pier was almost in darkness when they advanced stealthily upon the slowly heaving junk.

The customs-officer emerged from the shed inquisitively.

"Now, you fellows," he said huskily, "don't get fooling with that Chinese schooner. It gives the port a bad name. I saw Hayes up there not long ago," he added, "and whenever he's ashore we always want a few extra police in the town."

No one thought fit to answer, for at that moment the bear's outline was vis-

ible walking down the junk's gangway followed by Captain Kum Sin holding the long chain.

"Steady, lads," whispered a voice, "no hustling or the animal might get one of us."

A long trawling-net belonging to some fishermen hung on the pier-rail. In a flash it was secured and whipped around and over the bear the moment its feet touched the pier. With a scream of dismay the Chinese captain scrambled back

angrily. "On a hot night like this, too."

The crowd rushed past yelling insanely while they dragged their unwieldy burden towards the town.

"Where's Hayes?" ventured the leader of the party. "Haven't seen him since we left the pub."

"Must be hiding," gasped the man who held most of the bear in his arms. "Funny he isn't here."

The buccaneer waited in the shadow of the customs-shed until the bear had



Captain Hayes, loafing on the pier, observed her closely

to the fo'c'sle and vanished below deck.

The bear writhed and struggled in the double folds of the net as they bore it hurriedly down the pier. The customs-officer regarded them indignantly.

"I warn you," he began angrily, "that you have no right to forcibly remove anything from this pier." His lantern flashed on the black object struggling within the net. "Yah!" he withdrew in disgust to the shed. "Can't you enjoy life without stealing bears?" he cried

been safely trapped; then he watched them cross the sand-ridge leading to Schultz's whisky-bar before venturing across the pier, and with an utter disregard for Malay kris or Chinaman's pistol, he clambered aboard the junk and dived into the fo'c'sle.

In his day Hayes had inhaled the black odors of many Sydney and Calcutta crimp-houses; he had loitered within the plague-darkened byways of Madras and Bombay; but nothing that

defiles the air or sea could equal the rancid warmth that floated up from the junk's fo'c'sle. A tawny light enveloped the hutch-like enclosure. Spluttering oil-lamps burned at each bunk-head, and from the reeking interior of each coffin-like aperture peeped a bald pigtailed head. Occasionally a pair of "cooking" needles flashed out, turning and rolling the tiny black pellets over the sizzling lamp-flame. In the topmost bunk squatted Kum Sin, glassy eyed, owlishly despondent. Something had happened.

His eyes slanted towards the intruder and his yellow skin grew luminous as polished metal in the hot lamp-flare.

"Why you come here?" he asked thickly.

"Because I'm a commission of inquiry," said the buccaneer from the stairs. "The game is up, Kum Sin."

The captain of the junk blinked; an old bullet-scar on his right cheek seemed to grow livid in the yellow, lamp-poisoned atmosphere.

"You steal um bear. You know ebelying. Why fo you worry me?" he asked.

The buccaneer crushed forward half a pace, like one exploiting an *inferno*.

"That opium-cache, Kum Sin. You know it's contraband hereabouts. Where is it? Tell me; don't gibber like a pantomime-frog."

The painful silence that followed was not to the white man's liking. He almost feared the voiceless Mongolians sprawling inside the narrow bunks. They moved or turned sullenly as beetles; there was always a clenched hand pressing over the eyes as if to soothe the throbbing numbness of the brain. A pair of long needles clicked over a blue lamp-flame as they roasted and twined a stringy opium pellet. One narrow-skulled Tonquinese, lying on his side, yawned as if the devil of *ennui* were strangling him. Captain Kum Sin yawned in sympathy; a film came over his eyes.

"Seems to me that you people aren't listening," rasped Hayes. "My voice hasn't brightened the ship worth a cent, and I'll swear there's music in it."

Seizing Kum Sin's ankles he hauled his legs from the bunk, and gently, very gently held his naked soles over the

lamp-flame. For three seconds Kum Sin appeared unconscious of what was happening; then—his face creased and his eyes bulged. He struggled fiercely, but the iron fingers gripped his ankles until the flame spluttered and grew dark. A drop of sweat fell from the Chinaman's brow.

"Hi, yah!" he stammered hoarsely. "You letee go. I speakee."

The buccaneer tossed the heels into the bunk; the flame of the oil-lamp grew brighter and burned steadily. Hayes regarded him from the center of the fo'c'sle, hand on hip.

"Realizing that I'm a man of affairs, and that the lamp warms the heart as well as opium, you will kindly oblige with a speech, Kum Sin. I'm waiting," he added somberly.

"If I takee one big pill now I feel um no lamp-fire," snarled the tortured Chinaman. "What you do then?"

"Guess I'll put a flame through you that will wake you up, all right."

Kum Sin rubbed his instep thoughtfully with drug-blackened fingers.

"Opium all gone," he said after a while. "Bear cally it away. No use touchee me any more. You catchee bear."

The beaten tricks of language appeared palely inefficient when called upon to carry the buccaneer through the first outbreak of surprise and indignation. Then he grew calm and his mind nimble when he remembered the great white blank that sometimes sweeps over the minds of Chinamen.

"What's the bear got to do with the opium?" he asked. "It couldn't take the stuff ashore."

The yellow figures, crouching within the bunks, smiled wearily at the perturbed white man. Kum Sin's mouth twitched.

"Him only half a bear. One part skin; one part Chinaman."

"Oh!" Hayes appeared lost in thought for several moments. "Half Chinaman, half bear, eh? Kind of missing link." His face lit up suddenly. "P'raps you'll tell me which part belongs to the bear and which to the Chinaman."

"All bear outside," grinned the junk captain. "One lille Chinaman named

Bing Boh inside. Bing makee welly good bear. He learn tricks in Amelican show one time ago."

"If you are going to load me with a lot of bear-lies, Kum Sin, I shall have to fill the air with a smell of burnt instep. I can forgive anything but bear-lies," added Hayes bitterly.

"Me speakee truth," gurgled the Chinaman. "Me hard pushed to get opium ashore. Custom-man sleepie on the pier and watchum junk allee day, allee ni'. Me lead um bear down pier by one big chain. Custom-man go sleepie. All li, welly smooth. Nobody about. If pleeceman come me show him bear in the dark. Him no come too close—no feah."

Hayes broke into laughter, kicked a half-recumbent Malay into the bunk, and hurried up-stairs.

At the pier-head he met Ebenezer Wick, customs-officer and government-representative.

"Ebo!" Hayes led him into the shed sorrowfully. "About that bear?"

Mr. Wick felt his hair a trifle abstractedly and relit his smouldering pier-lantern.

"The poor creature's been ill-used, I reckon. And the sooner that crowd of yours understands it, the better. There's a resident-magistrate in this town, Captain Hayes," he added significantly.

Mr. Wick's fondness for animals was well known throughout the Gulf, and he had often allowed sailors and schooner-captains to bring dogs and pets ashore in defiance of the Queensland harbor regulations. There were times, however, when his good nature was imposed upon.

"I'm in sympathy with the bear, too, Ebo," admitted the buccaneer hastily. "I was once a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Bears. Yes, I'm angry, too, Ebo," he insisted, "and sober."

"Well, the bear aint hurt no one," continued Mr. Wick sternly. "Most peaceful animal you ever set eyes on. About sundown Captain Kum Sin asked if I objected to him exercising his bear up and down the pier and beach."

"You didn't mind, Ebo?" broke in the buccaneer.

"Why should I? Poor harmless thing, chained up in that smelly fo'c'sle head since they left Sourabaya. I don't say I'm gone on bears, but there's no extra charge in this port for a little kindness and humanity."

"And Kum Sin being fond of bears promenaded it pretty often, eh, Ebo?"

"Yes," drawled the customs-officer, "pretty often, a dozen times I should say. I was having a nap in here, and every time I woke I could see the Chinaman exercising his animal. It did seem a bit funny at first," continued Mr. Wick, "but any man who has been on shipboard with animals knows how they pine to stretch themselves. A man doesn't want an extra big brain to understand the poor brutes."

"Every time you woke you saw the Chinaman and bear strolling past," mused Hayes. "Well, I'm—"

Without a glance at the customs-officer he dashed from the sheds towards the township.

Inside Schultz's bar he found himself peering over the heads of the crowd at the naked head and shoulders of a Chinaman protruding from the skin of a black bear. The bewildered celestial was endeavoring to explain the situation in pidgin English when Hayes plunged his hand into the capacious interior of the skin and drew out a thick cake of opium wrapped in sun-dried banyan leaves.

A dozen inquisitive hands hauled the Chinaman from the loose-fitting bear's hide. The inside was rifled and searched until seven more cakes were discovered within the huge pockets that lined the interior. The buccaneer made swift calculations.

"Eight two pound cakes a trip: twelve trips per evening make it one hundred and ninety two pounds. Opium, the pure stuff, is worth forty dollars a pound hereabouts. Total seven thousand six hundred and eighty dollars. Not bad for one night's work."

The trapped Chinaman gesticulated hysterically.

"You no lockee me up. My master, Hung Chat, send me aboard um junk to cally away opium. He buy um bear-skin long time now; he makee me practice



"Don't move! Keep your hands down!"

inside bear-skin until I run about pletty smart. 'Welly goo' to bling opium ashore,' he says. You talkee to Hung Chat."

"He's only the tool of the big hasheesh syndicate at the gambling-house," Hayes indicated the chattering celestial contemptuously. "Every time he walked ashore as a bear he made six hundred and forty dollars for his bosses."

The Chinaman was hurried into a back room; Schultz locked the door and barred the window to prevent his escape.

"Now, boys," the buccaneer addressed the crowd briskly, "I never pretend to beat a chow at this contraband game, but if one of you will walk round to Hung Chat's gambling-house and tell him we've captured his bear we might persuade him to buy it back."

"I'll go, cap'n!" cried a thick-set diver, with rubber-chafed wrists and swollen hands. "I'll ask two hundred dollars for the bear."

"Two thousand," corrected Hayes. "Money down or no bear. Tell him if he doesn't hurry up we'll send the government-officer round with the bear and contraband in custody."

The diver departed hastily, while the buccaneer outlined a scheme whereby the local hospital would benefit to the extent of two thousand dollars after the gang of Mongolian smugglers had been forced to disburse.

Half-an-hour later the diver returned hatless and triumphant. He had been received by Hung Chat in person, he said. There had been a furious scene, but the Chinaman promised to pay the two thousand dollars providing all evidence of his guilt—the contraband and bear skin—were delivered to him within an hour.

Hayes listened and pondered for the space of thirty seconds.

"We must return his bear, boys," he said after awhile, "but no contraband.

Now, who's going to be the bear?" he added, glancing round at the eager crowd. "Don't all speak at once. It isn't often you get a chance to play your proper parts in life. Who'll climb into the hide and go with me?"

"I'm as much a bear as any man here," Bill Howe edged forward. "Mind, it's for the 'ospital," he growled warningly. "No larks, cap'n."

Hayes gathered up the warm bear hide and regarded the mate pensively.

"Bit of a struggle to get your feet in, Bill," he said dubiously. "A man like you takes a special size in bear skins. Wish Hung Chat had gone in for a hippopotamus hide; it would have fitted you like a glove."

The mate struggled into the hot, hairy covering while the yelping divers buttoned and laced it about his head and shoulders. Out in the road they stroked and offered liquid refreshments to the great four-footed shape that waddled and made strange noises whenever they became too familiar.

Hayes led the way. "Boys," he cried warningly, "don't follow! Keep your eyes on the opium pile inside the bar."

The bear followed him along the dark, hot road beside the sweltering mangroves, where the tide had piled the blue mud to the edge of the footwalk.

"Bit warm inside, Bill?"

Hayes spoke with his chin in the air. Not a breath stirred the oily waters of the bay.

"What you said about the hippopotamus hide wasn't over civil," panted the bear, "before that crowd of beer-swilling shellers, too."

"I only meant that a nice steady job as a hippopotamus would suit you, Bill. You'd hardly expect me to say that you could crowd that bulk of yours into a rabbit skin."

"I'm doing the 'ospital a turn," came from the hot interior of the bear hide, "or I'd get out."

They passed on swiftly. One or two trepang-fishers, loitering on the beach, stared incredulously at sight of the buccaneer tramping beside a shaggy, unwieldy animal that addressed him at intervals in muffled undertones.

The house occupied by Hung Chat was a low roofed affair surrounded by close planted acacias and casuarinas. It was the haunt of wealthy Chinese merchants, who came at all hours to indulge in a *yen-yen* and cook a little opium over the silver lamps in the silk-cushioned back rooms.

A small fat Achinese boy in an orange-colored kimono opened the door. He smiled at the buccaneer and led the way down a narrow, unlit passage that gave out mysterious odors of scented woods and perfumed oils. A room with a screened lamp and plush covered divans stood at the end.

The buccaneer entered without sound and nodded familiarly to an undersized Chinaman squatting on a pile of cushions.

"Good-night, Hung Chat. Nice mess you've made of it, rushing your unholy contraband past His Majesty's officials," he began. "You put a lot of simple faith in a blamed old hearth-rug blown up to look like a bear."

Hung Chat sat back and blinked. A touch of fear crossed his eyes.

"Bad job you think, Hayes? I hope you are my fiend," he said after a pause.

"Of course I'm your friend. I wouldn't let anyone touch you with a gallon of rosewater. Still, I'm afraid you've overdone it this time, Chat."

The Chinaman picked at his nails thoughtfully. His face seemed to grow old and withered; it was as if the shadow of a jail had crossed his vision. And Hung Chat, with his silken ways and delicate palate, was in no condition to face the horrors of a North Queensland prison. His manicured fingers trembled slightly; he turned his withered, opium-ravaged face to the buccaneer.

"What you think I better do, Hayes? What you advise, eh?"

"Buy the bear; it's in the passage. Two thousand dollars will clear your character."

"Two thousand!" There were screams unuttered in the Chinaman's dozing eyes. The skin of his face seemed to warp like hammered brass. "You cutee my throat, Hayes! You squeezee me to the heart."

The buccaneer leaned across the divan

and spoke to the perfumed, slant-eyed face.

"There's a jail at Shark Island, where the white warders sit on the wall with guns. There are sixteen cells—ten of them are filled with *kanackas* and black Arunti tribesmen—you know what they are. And don't forget the hominy, and the breakwater you'd help to build with your soft hands, and the long-bodied water-rats that would prowl over you at night. How do you like it, you brain destroying—parasite?"

Hung Chat crawled from the divan and turned to an open iron safe in a corner of the room; the keys rattled in his hands as he opened the door. Here and there one saw piles of opium cakes bulging from the shadows, hinting at the nefarious trade in which he was engaged.

A cash-box was jerked to the table in front of Hayes. Hung Chat opened it feverishly, took out a roll of bank notes, and spilled a parcel of sovereigns into a leather bag at his side.

The sudden clinking of a stirrup-iron, the unmistakable sound of a horse cheeking its bit outside, reached them. The Chinaman stood rooted; then his lean hand swept over the cash box convulsively.

"Wha' that?" he stammered.

Three sing-song words spoken in the vernacular came from an outside room. The buccaneer found himself staring into the barrel of a carbine.

"Don't move, Captain Hayes! And you, Hung Chat, keep your hands down—in the Queen's name."

The peaked cap and uniform of a Queensland trooper showed in the darkness of the passage. His spurs jingled as he stole half a pace nearer, but not for a moment did the short, wicked barrel move from its position.

"I'm sorry you're mixed up in this affair, Captain Hayes." The young trooper spoke quietly, like one certain of his men. "This opium-traffic is going to be put down."

The buccaneer swore under his breath. The carbine would cover him until the handcuffs were snapped over his wrists—and then—nothing would save him from penal servitude.

"I'm sorry, too, Hennessy," he answered pensively. "Sorry that you are going to arrest me in company with this—beast."

He indicated the chattering, fear-stricken opium-dealer.

A slight, imperceptible movement happened within the dark passage; the Dantesque shadow of a bear fell across the wainscot: two huge paws enveloped the trooper, holding him until his joints cracked under their fierce pressure. Hayes snatched the carbine from the paralyzed arms.

"Ef you're going to make trouble, Hennessy," the bear stooped over the helpless trooper, "I'll hug the soul out o' ye. We're only playin', mind; it's all guff an' pantomime, so don't start squealin'."

"I'll arrest the three of you first time I meet you outside," choked the young trooper. "I'll get you singly."

"Hennessy," with deft hands the buccaneer extracted a pair of handcuffs from his pocket gravely, "I must do you the honor first while my hairy friend passes a cord round your ankles. So—that will do nicely."

Hung Chat remained half hidden in the shadow of a beetle-covered screen. He made no gesture, uttered no sound until the handcuffs snapped over the young trooper's wrists. A long drawn sigh escaped him; it was as if the shadow of the Shark Island jail had lifted.

"Don't—don't leave me here with that Chinaman, Hayes!" The trooper rolled helplessly on the thick carpeted floor. "You remember what happened to Cardigan!"

The buccaneer halted half way down the passage. He had heard only a few weeks before of a trooper being caught alone by a gang of Chinese gamblers while attempting to arrest one of their number on a charge of murder. The yellow men had carried him into the distant scrub, where a couple of stout pegs had been driven into a nest of furious black ants. After stripping him they fastened him, neck and heel, to the pegs and quietly departed. A few days later a party of miners came upon an ant-ravaged skeleton whitening in the sun. So—

Hayes pondered a moment while the bear growled something in his ear. Returning swiftly to the room he loosened the handcuffs and ankle-cords and assisted the trooper to rise. No word was spoken.

The Chinaman watched the new turn of affairs with bulging eyes. Darting round the table he gesticulated fiercely to Hayes,

"Why you let him go? Wha' fo', wha' fo'? Why you no hold him like this!"

He drew his hands together as if strangling an unseen enemy.

Trooper Hennessy bent his head slightly. The buccaneer touched his shoulder.

"I'm going. Here's your carbine, and the bear has asked me to offer his apologies."

Pausing a moment in the passage Hayes looked back at the motionless trooper.

"You know your business, Hennessy. There's your contraband," pointing to the piled up cakes of opium, "and there's your Chinaman. Don't say I tied you up and allowed a horde of silk-whiskered vampires to crucify you on an ant-heap. Good-night, Hennessy."

"Good-night, Captain Hayes."

Hurrying from the silent house they

half ran down the tree-skirted road leading to the pier. An unmistakable chinking sound accompanied the bear's movements. Hayes halted and glanced at the skin-covered head beside him. "What's that jingling inside you, Bill?" he demanded sternly. "Did you—"

The mate plunged his hand into the folds of the pocket-lined skin and hauled out Hung Chat's bag of sovereigns.

"The 'ospital money, cap'n. We promised to hand it over to the sick people in that fever-trap of a buildin' near the creek."

The buccaneer gazed longingly at his schooner's light, riding beyond the breakwater, and his thoughts went out to the white penitentiary at Shark Island.

"Bit risky hanging about the town after what has happened, Bill," he said half-aloud. "The black police will be swarming in at daybreak. Don't you think we'd better—"

"Keep our word to the 'ospital," grunted the bear. "Mostly sick women an' little black picaninnies, cap'n."

Hayes frowned. "Guess I'm a bigger blamed fool than you when it comes to throwing a Chinaman's gold about. We'll keep our word to the hospital."

And they did.



"The 'ospital money, cap'n."

Victims of Kindness

BY UNA HUDSON

Author of "What the Colonel Wanted," etc

SEVERAL times in the course of the daily drives that her daughter insisted upon for her, Mrs. Temple had passed the farmhouse that lay some quarter of a mile beyond the Summer-colony.

It was a prosperous appearing and well-kept place, with beds of sweet smelling, old-fashioned flowers in the dooryard and a giant maple flinging its shadow across the front porch.

And here always an old man sat. At least most people would have called him old, but Mrs. Temple did not so consider him, for he seemed to her to be about her own age, and *she* was very far from calling *herself* old.

A large, strongly built old man he was, with a face reddened and roughened from exposure to sun and wind. Sometimes he dozed in his splint-bottomed, wide-armed chair; sometimes he yawned over a newspaper; but more often he whittled fiercely at a stick of wood.

One day, one of Mrs. Temple's horses picked up a stone in the road in front of the farmhouse. From his seat on the porch the old man watched the coachman's unsuccessful efforts to dislodge it.

Finally he arose and strode down to the gate.

"Here, young feller," he said, "just let me get at that."

The speed and deftness with which he removed the offending stone brought a little murmur of admiration from Mrs. Temple.

"It's all in knowing how, ma'am," he said. And to the coachman he added with a chuckle, "I reckon there's plenty of things yet we old fellers can teach you young chaps."

"You've got a right nice place," said Mrs. Temple, leaning out of the carriage. "I used to live on a farm," she added.

"Did you now?" said the old man

beaming. He waved a hand toward the wide, shaded porch. "Wont you stop and sit awhile?" he urged hospitably.

An instant Mrs. Temple hesitated, then: "It'll be like old times," she said. "John," to the coachman, "you come back in a little while."

He helped Mrs. Temple out of the carriage and suited his step to hers as they went up the prim, flower-bordered walk. Then he brought a rocker from the house and placed it beside his own splint-bottomed chair.

A young woman hastily wiping her hands on her checked apron came around the corner of the house.

"You got comp'ny, father?" she asked.

And without waiting for the old man's answer she addressed herself to the stranger.

"It's real hot, aint it? Wouldn't you like a glass o' nice, cool buttermilk now?" she suggested hospitably.

Mrs. Temple looked pleased. "I guess it'd taste real good," she said.

With the buttermilk Mrs. Fuller brought a plate of doughnuts, and Mrs. Temple rocked and sipped and ate and listened to her hostess' lively chatter concerning the speckled hen that always laid such big eggs and the young turkeys and the new calf.

"But this aint doing my work," the young woman laughed, as she took back the empty glass. "Just you set awhile and visit with father; he'll be real pleased. I reckon you two can find plenty to talk about."

She laughed good-naturedly and vanished in the direction of the kitchen, from which came presently a brisk rattling of pans with now and then a snatch of song.

"She's real pleasant spoken," said Mrs. Temple. "Is she your daughter?"

"She's my son's wife," said old Mr.

Fuller. "Yes, she's a real good woman, Lizzie is, and a master worker. Only—" he lowered his voice and glanced cautiously in the direction of the kitchen—"only she just don't understand."

Mrs. Temple looked at him sharply. "Young folks mostly don't," she encouraged.

"Here I am," said the old man, his grievance for once too much for him, "full as well able to do my day's work as any man going. But just because I aint so young as I once was it's: 'Now, father, don't you trouble yourself. You sit still and rest and read your paper. We'll do the work.'"

Mrs. Temple nodded. "I know," she said.

"Rest!" snorted the old man. "I tell you when a man rests he rusts!"

"I know how 'tis," Mrs. Temple said. "There's my daughter now. When Mr. Temple died nothing would do but I must leave the farm and go to live with Lucy. Seemed like I just couldn't get used to living in her cooped-up city-way. She married real well, and she gives me everything I want—except," she added whimsically, "what I *do* want."

"I could've staid on the farm just's well. 'Taint but a small place, and I could've got a man and his wife to work it on shares just as well. But, no, they must rent it. They said I'd be lonely—lonely in the house where I'd lived ever since I was married. Why, there was all the things I set store by, and the lilac-bushes I'd planted and the lilies o' the valley and—"

Her voice broke and a big tear rolled down her wrinkled cheek and splashed upon the back of her hand where it lay in her lap.

"It aint that they aint good to me," she said "for they are. It's only—"

"They just don't understand." said the old man.

The next day, when Mrs. Temple drove by, Mr. Fuller was waiting by the gate with a big bunch of mignonette, phlox, and sweet peas.

"I thought mebbe you'd like 'em," he said. "I picked 'em while 'twas early, before the sun had time to wilt 'em. And

there's a brood of little chicks just out. Mebbe you'd like to see 'em?"

Mrs. Temple would. She grew quite flushed and excited over the little yellow balls of down, and entered into an earnest discussion with Lizzie Fuller concerning the best method of caring for them.

"It does beat all," warm-hearted Lizzie that night confided to her husband, "how some folks can't seem to understand what old folks want. She's country-bred, that Mrs. Temple is, and I'd think anyone could see with half an eye that what she wants is country-life."

"Her daughter means well. Mis' Jones, who's been doing washing for her says she's a dreadful nice woman and awful fond of her mother. Only—she just don't understand."

"I guess," said Tom Fuller who always agreed with his wife, "you're about right, Lizzie."

"I tell you," went on Lizzie warming to her subject, "there aint many old people has it easy and pleasant like your father. He's here where he's always lived and everything kept up just so without any work on his part. Just nothing to do but rest and enjoy it. I tell you that's the way to treat an old person."

"I guess, Lizzie," said Tom Fuller again, "you're just about right."

"And I'm going to encourage Mrs. Temple to come here a lot," said Lizzie. "It'll do her good and she'll be company for father."

Mrs. Temple, as it happened, came without urging. At last she had found one who understood, and the old man's sympathy and ready comprehension helped her amazingly.

Mr. Fuller, on his part, found his enforced idleness much easier to bear when another sat beside him on the shaded porch and shared its cool comfort.

But one day when Mrs. Temple came he saw at once that something unusual had happened.

"It's my little farm," she told him breathlessly, as she dropped into the old rocker. "The folks that have been renting it are going away. Seems 'sif I just couldn't let it be rented again."

The old man leaned eagerly forward

and laid his hand on hers. It was a strong and capable old hand in spite of its wrinkles.

"I couldn't ask you before, Martha," he said, "for I didn't have any home to offer you. Of course this place is mine, and Tom and Lizzie'd be real good to you, but that aint what you're wanting. You've got to have your own place with your own things about you."

"But now seems 'sif the good Lord, who knows what each one needs, has just opened the way to us."

"If you'll just marry me, Martha, why, we could live on your little place —you and me together. I'm real strong and a real good worker. I could keep it all fixed up for you just as you'd want it. And you'll have all your own things that you've been wanting, and the lilacs and the lilies o' the valley and—"

"And you, Caleb. Oh, Caleb, I'd have you. Oh, I want to; you don't know *how*

I want to. But the children—my daughter and your son—I guess they wouldn't like it a mite, Caleb."

The old man stood erect and straightened himself. To the little, trembling, loving old lady he seemed a very tower of strength.

"The children," he said, "have had their way this long time. And their way aint our way. Martha, we—we'll *elope*; and then they can *say* what they please but they can't *do* nothing."

The little old lady arose and stood facing him. Her eyes were very bright and her cheeks were flushed an almost girlish pink.

"Oh, Caleb," she breathed softly, "let's."

The old man cast one hasty glance around. Save for a robin singing away for dear life up in the maple they were quite alone. He put his arm about her and bent and kissed her.

The Recoil

BY WILLIAM MAC LEOD RAINÉ

Author of "The Defection of Helen," etc

ILLUSTRATED BY N. C. WYETH

I

AROUND the bend and into the draw where lay the Chisholm place rode a horseman. He dismounted at the corral, tied his pony, and sauntered to the house with jingling spur. His roving eye fell on the figure of a young woman who was watering pansies in front of the porch and he immediately deflected toward her.

An observer would have found something in this homestead that differentiated it from many of the other pioneer ranches of the Tincup Valley. The house was of rough hewn logs and its furnishings were of the cheapest, but everything had been touched with the transforming fingers that wonderfully make home out of the least promising material.

It was easy to look at the sweet slim girl busy with her watering and know

who was responsible for the air of restful comfort that abided here. No wild rose on the mountains back of the meadow where she lived could have been purer, fresher, more unsophisticated than she. The warm, shy color mounted her cheeks at the least provocation, fled abashed at the slightest boldness of admiring gaze. She had kept house for her father in this distant outskirt of civilization ever since, at the age of ten, she had lost her mother, and of the great pulsing nation beyond the purple hills she knew nothing but hearsay. This was her narrow world, but she had inherited the subtle gift of refinement, the instinct for good taste that often dwells inexplicably in the lowliest surroundings.

In some crude fashion the young man striding toward her understood this. It

was quite impossible not to appreciate measurably her fineness, her grace, the perfection with which the simple print frock fitted her soft young lines. They were as much an emanation of her personality as her obvious, girlish, good looks. And with all his churlish nature he resented the quality in her that set her in a class apart from him, resented it and resolved dully to make her some day pay for her superiority. It was the vindictive perception of the difference between them that made his cavalier greeting more familiar than their relations warranted.

"Mornin', Jess! How are things a-comin'?"

Jessie Chisholm looked up, startled, biting her lower lip in a childish trick of embarrassment that still clung to her. She had not known of his presence, and then, too, nobody called her "Jess" but her father.

"We're both well, thank you. Father is at the barn, I think."

He laughed, enjoying her confusion with his possessive eyes.

"That's all right. Let him stay there. I don't know as I'm looking for the old man this morning."

This time her flush was of wholesome anger, but she remembered that it was obligatory to placate him since he was an officer of the forest reserve whose good will was so necessary to them.

"Wont you sit down on the porch, Mr. Fowler?"

"I reckon not. I'll help you with the flowers. And my name aint 'Mr. Fowler' to you. It's Jed."

"I've just finished. If you will sit down I'll go and get father," she said hurriedly.

His big body barred the way. "There's no hurry. It's your father's daughter I drapped in to see this mo'ning," he drawled. "You needn't always be in such a rush to go and hunt up the old man when I happen in. I don't bite—not young ladies, at least."

"I wish you wouldn't call my father 'the old man,' Mr. Fowler," she flamed.

"And I wish you wouldn't call me 'Mr. Fowler.' My name's Jed. Goes well with Jess, don't you think?"

"Will you please let me pass?"

"Not till I've got through telling you what I want to say."

They measured eyes a long moment, for despite her shyness the spirit in that slender body was compact of strength and courage.

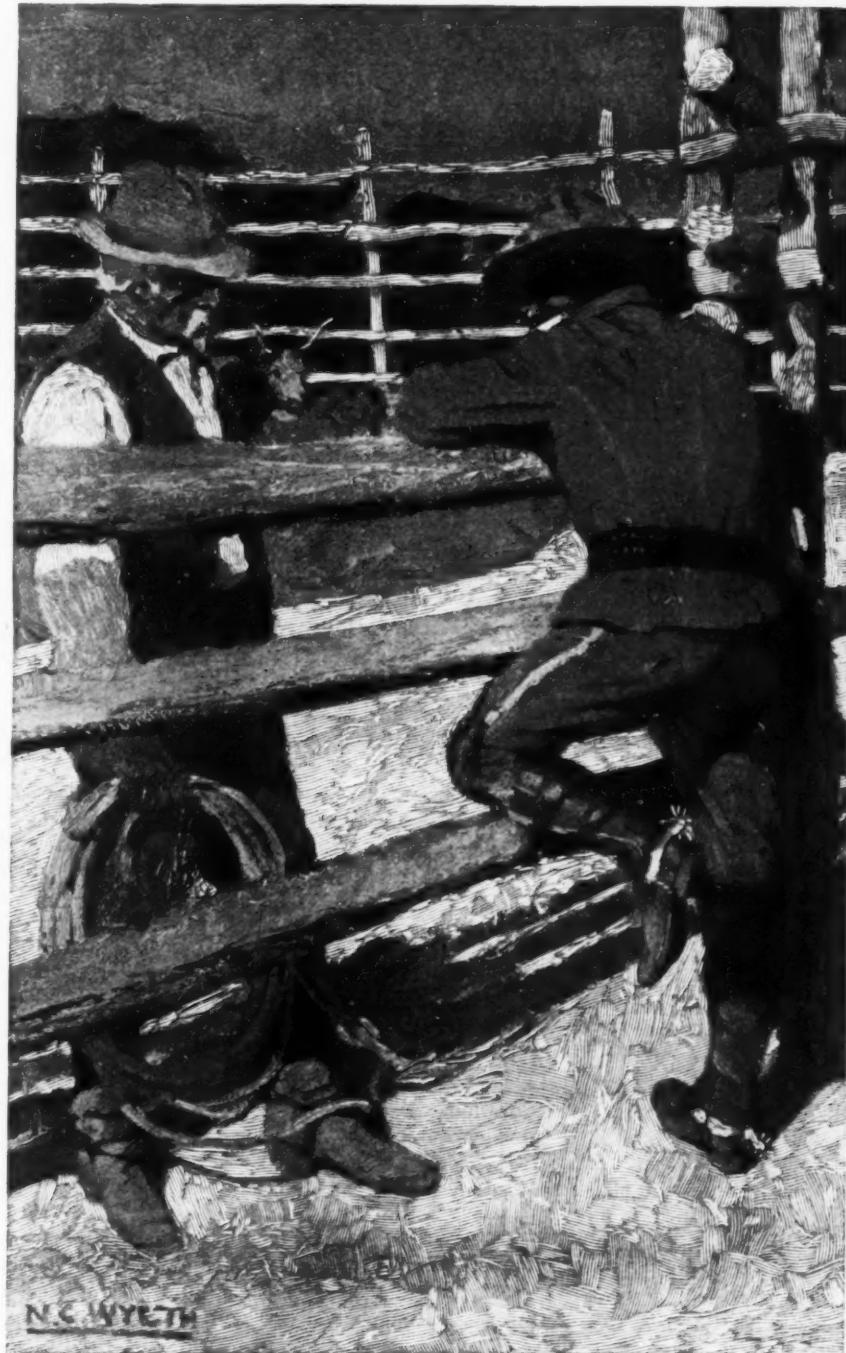
"Very well, Mr. Fowler. There are seats on the porch."

She slipped swiftly past him and ran up the steps. There was nothing for him to do but follow sulkily and take the second chair.

In his neat, serviceable, green uniform the forester looked the soldier, one set in authority, and there was that in his shallow, handsome face and cocksure manner that proclaimed every jot of official power that was in him.

Jed Fowler had always been a failure. There is something in the life of the frontier that sifts men, and this one had failed to "stand the acid," to "make good," as the Western phrases put it. While others had been wrestling a living from their raw land and laying the foundations of future fortune, he had drifted idly from one thing to another, seeking the short cut to wealth that eliminates hard work. He had not found it, and his grudge at his neighbors' "luck" had grown acute, for he had seen them fight their way toward prosperity while he grew out at elbows in idleness. He had jumped at the appointment of forester of the new reserve, even with the meager salary attached, for the place offered the opportunity for much easy graft and the chance to tyrannize over those who had had the effrontery to become more successful than he.

It offered something more—a lever by which he might hope to move old Jim Chisholm's daughter to favor his suit. The ranchman had worked for years on a ditch to carry water to irrigate his place. When it was nearly finished the hills back of the valley and a considerable part of the meadow had been included in a new forest reserve. Chisholm's ditch headed in it and ran for several miles through the district set aside by the government for forest purposes. There were many ways by which Fowler could harass the homesteader, but this ditch



"I came to see you about that ditch of yours, Chisholm!"

offered an excellent chance just now, since it lay in his power to condemn it and bring to nothing all the work that had been put on it. This would be a crushing blow, since without water the upland meadow was quite useless. And Jed Fowler meant to play this possibility for all it was worth with Jessie Chisholm.

Under his half-shuttered, smouldering eyes he watched lazily the resentful bloom beat into her cheeks. He knew that his bold, insolent scrutiny troubled her maidenly modesty, and it flattered his sense of power that it did. He was quite willing to be a disturbing element in the course of her quiet life, if not in one way then in another.

"You don't act as if you was glad to death to see me when I come, Miss Jessie. Now I wonder why."

"Am I not—civil?" she breathed, her eyes on the distant figure of her father as it moved about the corral among the cattle.

"Civil! I don't want your civility," he growled roughly. "I told you onct before that I want to marry you."

"And I answered that I couldn't."

"Why can't you?"

She forced herself to meet his eyes fairly. "I don't—care for you."

"And you do care for that cow-thief, Dick Brooks?"

"You have no right to say that," she cried, her eyes sparkling with anger. "And you wouldn't dare say it to him."

"Wouldn't I?" He laughed scornfully. "If it aint thieving to drive your cattle on the government grazing-land without paying for a permit I'd like to know what it is."

"I don't care to discuss that question with you. If you have nothing further to say I'll go in."

"But I have. I've got a heap to say that you'll find interesting."

She had risen to slim straightness and now he, too, got up and looked down at her, his malevolent face close to hers.

"I have been a friend to your father. When his cattle drifted on the reserve I aint reported them. It's been 'Help yourself' with all the timber he's needed, aint it? But I'm telling you this straight and

don't you forget it: The day you turn me down is the day you ruin old Jim Chisholm. I can put him out of business for fair, and I'm the white-haired lad that'll do it."

"You wouldn't be so cruel."

"Cruel nothing. It's business. That's all. I help my friends and I even up with my enemies."

"You know my father is too good to injure anybody. He is not your enemy."

"That aint the point. This is between us—you and me, understand."

"No; I don't understand how any man can be so small, so mean."

"You don't, eh?"

He had her hemmed in at the corner of the piazza hidden from view of the corral by the morning-glories and before she could divine his purpose he put his arm around her, drew her to him, and kissed her on the lips.

"Perhaps you can understand that, my beauty," he jeered. "Tell Dick Brooks and he'll understand it."

She pushed him away and fled flaming into the house, throwing the door to behind her as if she could shut out the hateful memory of what she had just endured.

The ranger strolled out to the corral, smiling with malignant triumph at his revenge. He had paid her in part. He would pay the old man now. Putting his arms on the top rail of the fence, he leaned on it and watched Chisholm trying to rope a calf. The rancher had lost an arm at Shiloh, and it was only after several casts that he succeeded in making a good throw.

"I came to see you about that ditch of yours, Chisholm. I've made up my mind that you'll have to clean out and burn the dead and down timber for fifty feet each side of it."

The old soldier's face whitened under the tan. "I can't do that, Jed. It runs for nearly five miles through the reserve. It would cost me two thousand dollars to clear it up for a hundred feet. Besides, what good would that be? Ice-cold water can't set your forest afire."

"I don't care anything about that. I'm telling you what you got to do."

"But it's outrageous. I haven't got the

money to do it. You might as well tell me to pull up stakes and move out."

"It wouldn't break my heart if you did," growled the forester sullenly. "But you won't run water through that ditch till you get my O.K. that it's cleared up satisfactorily, I'll promise you that. Another thing—you're running about forty cattle that drift on the reserve. You'll have to take out a permit."

"You know I can't do that. The ranchers in this district have agreed not to take out permits till the Supreme Court has passed on the Fred Light case," answered Chisholm quietly but with a sinking heart.

"Your agreement don't interest me a particle, Chisholm," drawled the forester, insolently. "Just because a bunch of you fellows agree to violate the law—"

"But you don't know whether it's the law or not till the Supreme Court passes on it."

"I aint worrying any about the Supreme Court. The Forestry Department has made a ruling and I guess you'll abide by it. You aint bigger than the United States government, my friend."

"But we claim it is an unjust ruling, contrary to law. Cattlemen have always used the open range. If your department doesn't want our cattle on the reserve, let it fence just the same as any other owner. That's fair."

"I aint arguin' with you, old man. I'm laying down the law. Get your cattle off the reserve or there'll be trouble."

"I couldn't get them off with a regiment of soldiers at this season. You know that."

"That's your business. I'm attendin' to mine when I warn you."

Fowler turned on his heel and swaggered to his pony. "I'll give you three days to get 'em off," he called back as he gathered the reins and rode away.

Chisholm leaned faintly against the fence. He had a weak heart and this had been a great shock to him. For eight years he had been building here for his little girl's future, and at one stroke this upstart had deprived him of the legitimate fruits of his toil.

Without water to irrigate, his ranch was useless. Fowler's unjust demand he

knew to be a declaration of war, and the experience of his neighbors showed him plainly that he could not stand up against the forest-ranger if the latter were determined to oust him. He might appeal, but his appeal would fall on deaf ears already prejudiced against him because he had signed with his friends an agreement not to pay the leasing-fee till the courts had given a final decision. The cards were stacked against him. In the bitterness of his heart he groaned aloud, then slowly made his heavy way to the house.

Fowler rode jubilantly down the valley. He would show Jess Chisholm whether she could throw him down when she pleased. He would show all these ranchmen that they had to stand in with him if they were going to make money. There would be fat picking in this job if he worked it right. He had been too easy with them. They needed the thumbscrews tightened before they would understand. Now there was Dick Brooks. He ground his teeth in a sudden flush of rage, and even before it had ebbed turned a corner and came face to face with the man whom he was cursing.

The stockman's alert, gray eye photographed his impotent fury with an amused comprehension that was almost contempt. Neither tall nor large, every line of Dick Brooks' lean, clean build promised easy power. He wore the soft broad-brimmed hat, the polka-dot bandanna loosely knotted round his throat, the gray shirt and faded overalls, the wrist gauntlets characteristic of his class. He needed no insignia of rank to point him a leader of men. It was written in his bearing, in the competent vigilance of eye and strength of tight-clamped jaw.

He was passing with a curt nod when the ranger stopped him.

"I hear you're expecting to drive a bunch of beef-steers to the railroad tomorrow, Mr. Brooks."

"Your hearing is correct, sir."

"Well, I want to tell you that you can't drive through the reserve without getting a permit."

"That's your guess, is it? Now you listen to mine, Mr. Ranger. A country road

runs past my place to the railroad. It's been there twenty years, and it's the only way I can get my cattle to the market. I'm going to drive my steers along that road to-morrow forenoon, reserve or no reserve."

"I'll have to arrest you if you pass through the reserve."

"You bring a court-warrant with you then or don't you come," advised Brooks grimly.

"The Use Book says—"

"Yes, I know your 'abuse book' says when I must go to bed, and when I must get up, and whether I should have flapjacks or bacon for breakfast. But you see the Use Book aint my Bible."

"Well, it had better be. You don't own the earth. I'll learn you who rules the roost here," Fowler burst out in a fury.

The stockman met his defiance impassively, his gray steely eyes resting steadily on the ranger. When he spoke it was with studied gentleness.

"But you see I do own the earth—that part of it you're standing on anyhow. This is a private road, Mr. Ranger, as you happen to know. And while it's on our minds I'll advise you to get off it. Jump!"

The last word rang out crisp and stern.

"I don't have to."

"Not if you'd rather be kicked off."

Their gazes fastened. The eye is a barometer of courage, a prince of deadly weapons. It was the forester's that lost the battle.

"I aint here looking for trouble," he growled.

Brooks laughed without geniality. "I guess you're always looking for it but you hate to find it."

"I aint through with *you* yet," the forester called back over his shoulder as he rode away.

"Glad you mentioned it. I'll keep my hen-house locked nights," retorted the other contemptuously.

The stockman rode on to the Chisholm place, where he found all in confusion. The old Civil War veteran had had an attack of heart failure and his daughter met Brooks at the door with a very white face.

"I'm *so* glad to see you, Dick," she broke down. "I thought—that he wasn't going to get over it. It was terrible."

"But he's better now?" said the young man gently.

"Yes, he's resting quietly."

"Do you know what caused it?"

"It was that man Fowler."

And she told him the whole story, except the particulars of what had occurred on the porch. Those he heard later from her father.

It appeared that Chisholm had come home, found her in tears, and discovered the insult that had been offered his one ewe lamb. This, added to what had gone before, had proved too much for him.

Brooke stayed all day, heartening them with the sunshine of his cheerful talk, that came from a heart full of love and sympathy. He left about dusk, by which time Chisholm was much better. But neither father nor daughter knew that after he had saddled his pony he took a horsewhip from the old buggy in the barn and carried it away with him toward the ranger's camp.

II

"Well, what's the trouble now?" testily asked the Supervisor of the Holy Peak Battlement Reserve. "It seems to me you ranchmen spend all your time fighting this Department."

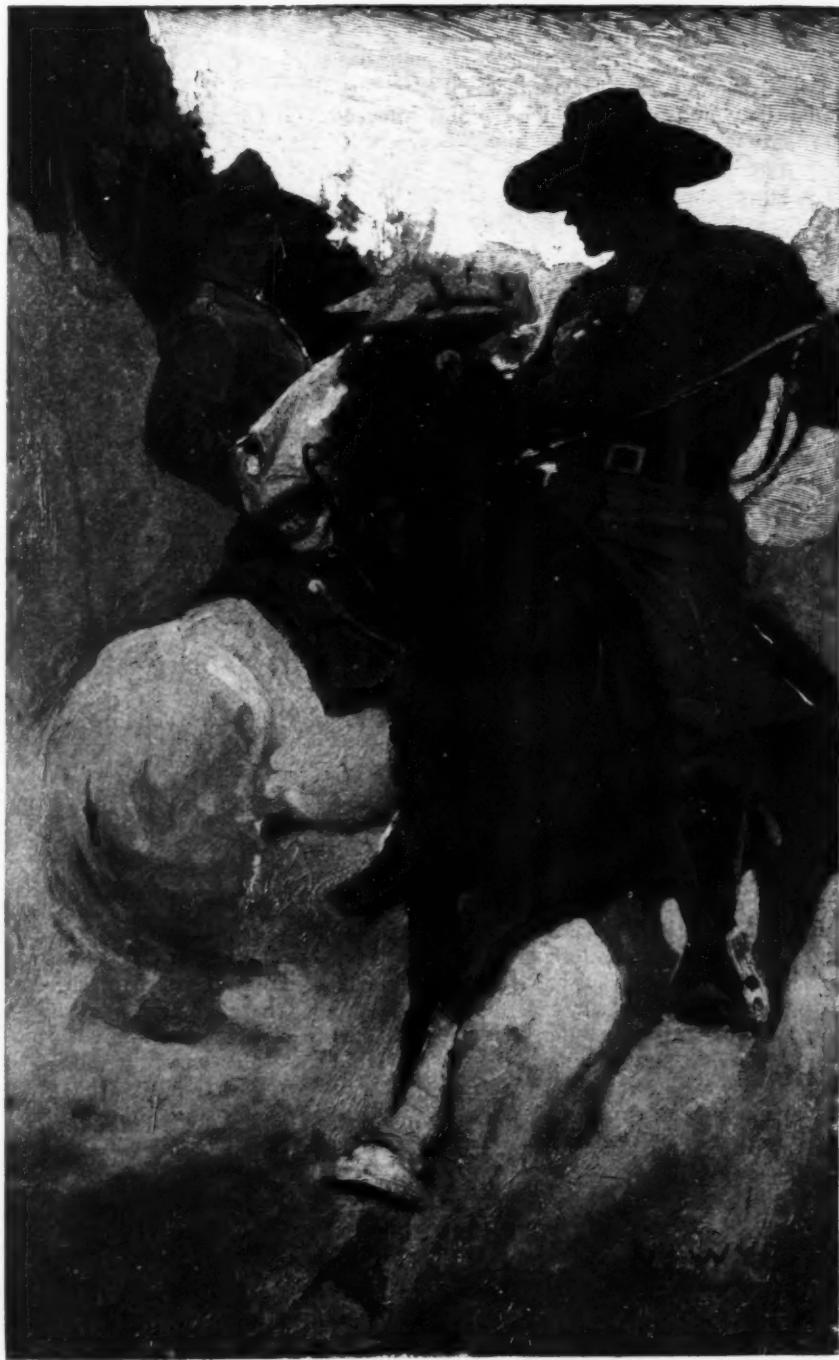
The young man on the opposite side of the desk accepted the challenge quietly.

"All we ask is a square deal. I came to see you on behalf of a man who isn't getting one. One of your rangers is throwing the hooks into one of the finest men I ever met, old Jim Chisholm down on the Tincup, just because his girl wont have anything to do with the scalawag. Is that right?"

"Who are you? Do you live down that way, sir?"

"My name's Brooke—Dick Brooke. Yes, I live about three miles below the old man."

The Supervisor's face hardened. "Are you the Brooke who organized all this opposition to the Forest Service, the one



"I aint through with you yet," the forester called back

who brutally assaulted one of my rangers the day before yesterday?"

"I'm the man you mean, but I don't put it just that way. The coyote insulted a young lady and I horsewhipped him. He got only what was coming to him."

"I don't care to talk to you at all, sir."

"You mean you won't listen to any side but the one Fowler dishes up to you?" asked Brooke.

"You'll have a chance to explain your murderous attack in court. I don't care to hear any apologies."

"I haven't any to offer. What I want to talk about is Jim Chisholm's ditch."

"He is unfortunate in his advocate. He breaks the law himself, and he sends a lawbreaker to plead for him."

"Old Jim Chisholm never broke a law in his life. He went out and lost an arm for his country when the call came. Everybody knows he is one of the whitest men in this state."

"He breaks the law when he lets his cattle range on the reserve without paying for a permit. Let him comply with the regulations and I'll listen to him. Till then he has no rights on the reserve. I indorse Fowler's position."

"No rights on the reserve. That's funny. Chisholm's been out in this Western country thirty years trying to build it up. He made his pile and then had hard luck and went broke. Now he's made another start and he's up against it. The small cattleman has troubles aplenty—short Summer, long Winters, deep snow, bad roads, heavy railroad rates, and the packers' trust. But he settles here and trusts to the open range to make ends meet. He knows there's always been an open range on the frontier. It's one of the rights that go with pioneer settlement. Then along comes your department and says it wants to help the home-builder. So it soaks a tax on him for every cow and calf he's got. At every turn of the road he runs up against the blamed regulations it makes. That's certainly a right funny way of helping him."

"It's the law," snapped the Supervisor. "Let Chisholm take out his permit and he'll get along all right."

"It aint the law till the Supreme

Court of the United States says so. This aint Russia. It's America, and every little homesteader has as much right as your big department with its thousands of employees. Jim Chisholm can't take out a permit because he's a man and not a yellow dog. He's agreed to stand pat with the rest of us and he will, even though you hound him to death."

"We're not hounding him."

"I understand you are going to have him arrested on a criminal charge because, without his knowledge, his cows drifted on your reserve."

"We are going to make an example of his case. Yes, sir!"

"Pass the old man up, Mr. Hance. He's got a weak heart and is mighty near all in. Have your department jump on me instead."

"I don't think we care for any advice about how to run our affairs, not from our enemies at least."

"All I'm asking is that you choose any other man on the river except Chisholm. He aint in any condition to stand excitement."

"He should have thought of that before he broke the law," answered Hance coldly as he turned away.

III

One evening, a week later, at the little bridge above the Chisholm place, Jed Fowler saw a slender figure waiting in the dusk. Through the exquisite luminous glow that preceded darkness she seemed to swim toward him with the shy sylvan grace of a wood nymph.

"It is you, Dick, isn't it? Oh, I thought you never would come," she cried softly.

"You've got another guess coming," snarled the furious ranger. He pushed past her without stopping, but over his shoulder he called back vindictively: "If you happen right up to the house you'll find interesting news I reckon."

Shaken by a great dread, she called to him to stop. Her fear was wholly for her father.

Fowler's refusal came back to her in a jeering laugh as he set spurs to his horse. She fled after, caught in a tide of

terror that swept through her in cold waves, so torn by anxiety that she gave no heed to the sound of a second galloping pony crossing the bridge. It was but a short distance to the house. Her father was still sitting quietly at the table where he had been reading, his finger at the place on the open book at which he had been interrupted. Exuding malevolent triumph, the ranger was drawing a paper from his pocket. Swiftly the girl crossed the room and stood behind her father, one arm round his shoulder, her steady eyes upon the man who was revenging himself upon them for his failure.

Thus Dick Brooke found them when he came through the fan-shaped shaft of light that streamed into the darkness from the open door. The old soldier was gently stroking his daughter's hand to reassure her. He sat erect and fearless, with the empty sleeve pinned to his coat, heart - failure forgotten, the one - time fighting fire of battle in his gray eyes. He was a criminal, according to the paper his enemy had just finished reading, but Dick Brooke had never seen him look more a man.

"I should like to read that warrant," he said evenly.

Fowler tossed it across to him with an insolent laugh. "It's all there — every word of it. I reckon I'll have to trouble you to saddle your hawss and ride to town with me."

He produced a pair of handcuffs and began to unlock them ostentatiously. They were merely for dramatic effect, but the ranger meant his victims to miss no jot of humiliation he could inflict.

"You wouldn't—"

Jessie stopped, her voice choking with indignation.

"Wouldn't I? You'll see."

Fowler turned to her father, a note of truculence in his coarse voice.

"We'll be moving, old man, and I warn you not to attempt to escape or I'll sure drill a hole in you."

"One moment, Mr. Fowler, before you begin the fireworks."

At the sound of the gentle drawl from the door Jessie's surcharged heart knew an instant of joyous relief. Dick was here. Everything would be all right now.

The ranger whirled, hand on revolver. His heart was black with hatred, but there was some quality in Brooke's smiling aplomb that held his anger in leash.

"Did you come here to interfere with the execution of the law?" he cried.

"If you'll postpone that gun-play I'll tell you why I came," the stockman retorted with easy contempt. "I've been to Denver, Mr. Fowler, since the last time we met—been down to the land-convention there. It was a right interesting meeting. Five or six senators were there, and so was the head of your department. I happen to know one of the senators and through him I met the others. We pow-wowed some about this ditch-case, and then we went over and had a talk with your chief. He's a mighty pleasant gentleman and he's seen the light."

"You can't bluff me—" Fowler began in a scream, but the words stuck in his dry throat.

For Brooke had taken a quick step forward and drawn something from his pocket.

The ranger breathed again. The weapon the stockman produced was one no more dangerous than an unsealed letter.

Supervisor Hance of the Holy Peak Battlement Reserve is ordered to proceed no further with the Chisholm case as it has been referred directly to Washington for consideration. Pending an investigation, Ranger Fowler is suspended from the service.

Beneath was the signature of the Head of the Department.

The ranger's face was a study in baffled rage and chagrin. His weapon had recoiled upon himself. He had dug a pit and fallen into it. With a curse he flung out of the room.

In the first ecstatic flush of release Jessie threw her arms about her father's neck. He touched her hair softly with fingers that were beginning to tremble now that the danger was past. Through misty eyes she saw him, so nearly lost to her, so completely restored.

Over his shoulder her gaze fell on Dick Brooke, watching their happiness quietly from the other side of the room. She stretched her free hand to him with an impulse that was more than gratitude.



"I was with Croydon on his last tour"

The Coast Defender

BY JOHN FLEMING WILSON

Author of "Jonathan Figg," "Cook," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES E. CHAMBERS

OLD MAN MARLOW listened to the conversation with ill-concealed contempt. At special points in it he would turn to his wife, nudge her and then stare into her affectionate brown eyes with a vast weariness, as much as to say that deafness were a blessing. Mrs. Marlow, busy over a work-basket, would smile gently and return to her mending. She was always mending. As the Old Man used to say, "Tatty Marlow has mended her way from San Francisco to New York a dozen times and from one hundred nights in 'Sag Harbor' to one-night stands in 'The King of Crime.'" It was known, also, that she had once been a *Rosalind*, though a generation of theatrical people had loved her simply as Aunt

Tatty, the wife of the old and reliable character-man, Peter Marlow. Just now she was mending a necktie for the Juvenile across the aisle of the car. The Juvenile was taking the lead in the conversation that provoked the Old Man.

Possibly the scenery without was as depressing as the fresh, twitchy voice of the youth within. It was raining and the fields were sallow with Autumn. Behind the Fanny Stairs Repertoire Company was Chicago; ahead of it stretched interminable one-night stands, which reminded the Old Man very much of the perspective of telegraph-poles along the track. Suddenly his patience broke and he leaned heavily over the arm of his seat to say sarcastically,

"I never knew a Juvenile that did not have more reminiscences than anybody else in the company. Juveniles are born with reminiscences of the theatre, I think."

Harry Latt, at whom the rebuke was aimed, looked around to see whether Miss Stairs was the instigator of this. The Star quite often depended on Old Man Marlow to keep discipline. But Miss Stairs was not visible. The Juvenile took courage and smiled.

"I suppose it does look as if I were pretty up-stage," he replied frankly. "But I was telling them about Croydon—the Great Croydon."

Old Man Marlow snorted. "I never heard of him. Who was he?"

"He played with Booth," was the quiet response.

Another snort greeted this. The Old Man had confessed to each member of the company, under seal of secrecy, that he had, himself, played with Booth.

"But say not a word," he had enjoined the recipient of his confidence. "Everybody now-a-days has played with Booth. I don't talk about it."

So he had no repartee to this thrust other than a snort.

The Ingenue brushed the hair out of her eyes and smiled slightly at the boy.

"When did you play with him?" she asked.

"Oh, a long time ago," said the Juvenile. "I was with Croydon on his last tour. We did 'The Vigilante,' 'Macbeth,' and 'The Danites' on the Pacific Coast."

"A Coast Defender!" Old Man Marlow sniffed. "Milpitas and the inward parts of California! Eureka and the harbors of California and Oregon! Oakland sometimes, never San Francisco! 'The Great Croydon!'"

His contempt resounded the length of the car.

"I called him 'The Great Croydon,'" the Juvenile retorted. "He called himself 'Coriolanus Croydon, Tragedian.' But he was the Great Croydon to all of us with him."

"All juveniles?" demanded the Old Man, rolling in his seat.

"Here's your necktie, Harry," said Mrs. Marlow, equably. "Be careful of it

now. And don't mind Peter. Peter is jealous."

Peter grinned and patted his wife's hand. "I'm afraid of these young fellows, that's so, my dear," he said. "You see, I was a juvenile myself once, and you insisted on marrying me!"

Harry Latt put the necktie away in his suit-case and looked out the window.

"Croydon was a great man," he said gently.

His words did not strike the ear loudly. But Peter Marlow reddened.

"I didn't mean to say anything against the Great Croydon, Harry," he said apologetically, "only, I never heard of him. Must be a young chap."

"No, he wasn't," the juvenile answered. "He was easily sixty when I knew him. He had been playing forty years."

"Peter has been playing forty years," Aunt Tatty put in calmly.

"I can see how you never heard of him," Harry Latt went on. "He never got off the Coast. I suppose he was the original 'Coast Defender.' In fact, he'd got the name in the profession—out in the West—of '*The Coast Defender*.' I used to look at him and wonder how he stood it. Just imagine forty years in tragedy and never getting beyond the little towns, never getting to Chicago or Boston or New York! And he was ambitious! 'I'll take my company to Broadway next year,' he would say when receipts were good. 'Booth told me one day, "Coriolanus, wait your chance! New York will welcome you yet!"' And he was always planning to play *Macbeth* there."

Followed a silence. The car swerved round a curve and a door slammed. The Ingenue leaned back and closed her eyes.

"I suppose he never got there," she suggested.

"Never," was the brief reply.

"Dead?" Aunt Tatty inquired.

The juvenile smiled. "That was my reminiscence," he said. "I was going to tell about him."

Peter Marlow nodded his gray head. "Go on, son."

I QUIT "*THE DANITES*" in Stockton one May. I had just money enough to get me

to 'Frisco and into a room on Golden Gate avenue. I went to an agency and registered, read the papers, and settled down to wait for an engagement. It was six weeks coming, and when it did I was pretty nearly starved and my clothes were all in pawn. It didn't appear much of an engagement, anyway, even for a Summer-season. But it was something. It was with Coriolanus Croydon in *repertoire*. The agent sent for me and I walked into his office and right into Croydon himself. Of course, I'd heard of him and about his little ways. There he was, to the life. He was six feet high, with a dark, sullen face and a mass of iron-gray hair. He never wore a waistcoat, nor cuffs. His coat was unbuttoned and his big chest bulged out of it just as his big hands and wrists stuck out of his sleeves. That was Croydon.

"Is this the young gentleman?" he roared in a prodigious voice when the agent had introduced me.

The agent seemed flustered and shook his head at me as much as to say, "Keep your mouth shut."

The Great Croydon looked me over and suddenly said, "Be good enough to strike me, sir!"

I suppose I intended to laugh. But I didn't. I slipped up to him, tapped him a light one on the chest, thumped him with all my might, and slipped back. I heard his big hand whizz by my ear as I ducked. I looked at him and he smiled a little.

"Be good enough to sing, sir!" he belowed.

I can't sing and I know it. I got fired from "The Danites" because I couldn't sing. But I had heard Erne give "Those Evening Bells" in a burlesque and I have always remembered how I cried. So I sang "Those Evening Bells" in a cracked voice. The Great Croydon stared at me the first two verses and then walked to the window while I finished. When I was done he turned on me fiercely.

"Be good enough to read me something, sir!"

That over with he grunted.

"Sign with me for fifteen a week, sir," he said. "Go to Alameda to-morrow and report at 10 o'clock for rehearsal."

When he was gone the agent wiped his forehead and actually suggested a drink at his expense. Over the drink he explained, with tears in his eyes, that one could never tell what the Great Croydon would do.

"He wanted an *ingenue*," he told me, "and I fetched a little thing that has been hanging around here for six months eating her uppers. Pretty and clinging, you know. None of the managers would have anything to do with her. So I sent for her after he'd turned down all the others and tried to coach her what to say and how to behave. But when Croydon went at her, just as he went at you, she cried and couldn't do a thing but wipe the tears away. Now, wasn't that a nice way to treat me? She owed me three dollars for fees, too, and just when I make a fool of myself to favor her she *cries*." The agent was furious.

"What happened?" I inquired tenderly.

Croydon stared at her awhile and then went up to her and took her by the arm and roared at her, "What's the matter?" And she stared up at him and said as simply as a babe, "Oh, sir, I'm quite afraid of you!" I reached for my hat to be out of the scene," the agent went on, "but the Great Croydon picked her up into his arms and said, 'Don't you be scared. I'll give you twenty a week and you're coming to rehearsal to-morrow at 10 o'clock.'"

I had some words with the agent over my getting only fifteen a week, whereas the girl got twenty, so I didn't hear any more of his yarn. But I paid him his commission and reported for rehearsal on the dot.

There were just five of us regularly in the company, I found: Croydon himself; Miss Tyndal, the leading woman; Bill Perkins, the heavy; myself, and the little girl the agent told me about. Croydon gave us a talk on Art, asked us about our outfits and clothes, and then announced that we would get up "Macbeth."

We got up "Macbeth" in four rehearsals, if you please, and then the great Croydon trotted out a play of his own called "The Vigilante." It was a five act

horror of a tragedy. I had two hundred sides. It was awful. We rehearsed it for six weeks, right through the Summer. Then we found a notice on the board that we were to be ready to take the 3:35 train for Antioch the next afternoon and open that night in the Antioch opera-house.

"The Vigilante" did pretty well for the first two months and we played to good houses as far as Dunsmuir. The Great Croydon was known everywhere, and the same old stand-bys that had come to see him for forty years trotted out to see him in his own play. But the papers roasted us and the play, though they had nice things to say about the Great Croydon. You never were on such a sickening tour in your life. I have my book of clippings yet and read them over once in a while just to see how thoroughly browned I was. But the Old Man seemed satisfied. Each morning, when we got in early enough to have a rehearsal, he would calmly bring out what the Milpitas *Gazette* or the Siskiyou *Plaindealer* had to say, and impress on our minds the justice of the criticisms and exhort us to do better and not shame our Art. Just as if it weren't his vile play that was doing us up. No one could have acted that mess.

Then the day came when the receipts began to fall off. The country was finding out what sort of an aggregation we were. The Great Croydon stood it for a week and then put on "Macbeth" to stem the tide. It was no use. He revived "The Danites" and that failed to save us. Then he announced calmly that we would return to 'Frisco and sail for Honolulu.

That made the papers take us up. The big dailies ran pictures of Coriolanus Croydon, the Veteran California Actor and Tragedian. There were articles recalling his forty years' services to the drama. You see, he was the original Coast Defender. And when we sailed from the wharf—on a steam-schooner—there were flowers in the cabin and a crowd with handkerchiefs and cheers and a great to-do. Perkins was beside me, and as we left the slip he pointed out the critics of the big dailies.

"This means a lot," said Perkins solemnly. "The Great Croydon will yet see Broadway!"

Coriolanus drank it all in, the flowers, the crowd, the little group of critics with morning-papers sticking out of their overcoat-pockets. He leaned over the rail, majestically, his gray hair rising above his dark, sullen face, his chest bulging out of his half-opened coat, his big hands clutching the rail. Oh, he was splendid, I tell you. And when the little steamer swung her bow seawards the crowd cheered again.

We heard the Great Croydon's magnificent roar of acknowledgment, "Farewell, Friends! Farewell, Kind, Good Friends!"

The Little Girl—that's what we called the *ingenue*—was beside me and she clapped her hands.

"Isn't he splendid?" she whispered. "He's so daring and brave and magnificent!"

It was a change from the frosty stands up-country, and I began to think that after all the Great Croydon might be coming into his own, and little me with him. For the first time I was rather unashamed to be his Juvenile.

I had better say at once that while we were *en tour*, doing coast-defense, as the saying goes, Coriolanus was as cold and distant as any first magnitude star. We didn't have a special car, so he usually sat by himself in the smoker, solemnly puffing a pipe. At hotels we ate at the commercial tables, while he sat in solitary grandeur at the four bit *table d'hôte*. He never let down a minute. He was the Great Croydon.

But on the steamer he was different. We thought that maybe the warmth of his send-off had thawed him. He opened out. One could see his big iron-gray head rising from beyond the wheelman's shoulder any time of day, have a glimpse of his muscular arms bared to the elbow and lying negligently across the spokes of the wheel, hear his deep bass roaring along the decks as he talked to the captain or to one of us.

Yes, he talked to us. He would walk the deck with an arm over old Bill Perkins' shoulder and tell him jokes of thirty

years ago, throwing his great head back and shouting amazing guffaws. As we neared the tropics he abandoned his coat altogether, and stamped back and forth swinging his knotted arms, puffing out his chest, defying the very sea with theatric *bravado* that was truly magnificent.

Quite modestly, understand me. Nothing boastful or up-stage about him. Just good fellowship. Maybe Perkins was right when he said that the Old Man had opened out after forty years' loneliness.

One night we were sitting at table after supper when the captain said some-



"Be good enough to strike me, sir!"

He was popular. The captain listened to his stories and forgot to relieve the mate for supper till that officer would stick his head into the open skylight and growl rumbling imprecations. He would sit boyishly on the rail of nights to talk interminably of the old past, of his friends, of his plays, of the shining days of Booth, and McCullough, and Ristori.

thing about the greatness of making people laugh and cry and feel thrills around the back of their necks. The Great Croydon had just been declaiming *Lady Macbeth's* last lines, while the Little Girl looked at him with tears. We all loved the Little Girl.

Coriolanus dropped his eyes to the cloth and threw his big palms out over

the table. His head sank on his breast. It was an old trick of his and quite effective. I expected some platitude, some half-deprecatory acceptance of the implied compliment. But instead he groaned. We stared at each other and the Little Girl sat up very straight. We had never heard a voice like that from the Great Croydon. It lacked staginess.

Then he lifted that handsome, sullen face of his and said quietly: "It amounts to nothing at all. We play a love, a hate; we play at glorious death and resounding heroism. And what does it amount to? Some other person will play it after we're gone. Some other man will shiver at the feast. Some other man will kiss the same tender mockery of a kiss. We do nothing *real*. I would give up all the applause of my forty years to hear a cry at one fine act of my own, one deed of Coriolanus Croydon, not the actor, but the *man*. I have *played*, captain. You have *lived*. I envy you." The Great Croydon stretched out his big arms till the muscles swelled. "I might have done something worth while," he muttered, "if I had had the chance." He groaned again.

That night Perkins came into my room and sat down on the edge of the bunk with his pipe in his hand.

"The Coast Defender is breaking up," he said solemnly. "He's lost his grip. Miss Tyndall and I were just talking it over. It's a shame."

"How's that?" I asked him.

Perkins mandered a while over his pipe and then got up to go out.

"I'll tell you," he said, finally. "The Old Man doesn't care for it any more. He's reached the top so far as he is concerned. He never was built for the profession, anyway. He ought to have been a soldier. He hasn't the last touch. He's too brutal. I see now why he never reached Broadway. He's breathing fresh air at last."

What Perkins said was impressed on us all as the voyage went on. The Old Man grew nervous and fidgety. He was forever coming out of the cabin and going down on the maindeck to talk with the crew, ask them about the vessel's gear, getting them to tell him stories.

And at night he wouldn't talk as he had done at first. He listened to the skipper's yarns and insisted on the final detail of every shipwreck and storm.

It made us all blue. We were sure we were going to be stranded in Honolulu. The Great Croydon was disappearing. We were looking for our bread and butter to a man who had lost interest in his profession; who had, to speak frankly, abandoned its necessary pose. The Little Girl, I am free to confess, did not share our disillusion. She followed the Old Man about with her eyes and was forever blushing to herself when he caught hold of a rope to help the sailors pull, or threw his weight on the boom when it was tack ship. Imagine the Great Croydon doing this and then throwing his head back like a boy and guffawing in pure delight. Imagine the Little Girl nodding to herself each time as much as to say, "How powerful he is!"

Not that he noticed her at all. His eyes never rested on her beyond a kindly glance now and then. In fact, he rather avoided us all. Not in an up-stage way, but simply as if he had something more important to do than talk business.

It was a long voyage to the islands, due to the fact that, as the wind was fair, we sailed most of the time and the captain said coal was costly in Honolulu and he wished to save fuel for the return-trip to the Coast. And during the long days we had a sharp blow or two. There Croydon was in his element. He was on deck all the time, pulling on the sheets, helping at the wheel, stamping back and forth in the wind; wild to be doing something.

The captain observed and called out to him on several occasions, "You're a good seaman, Mr. Croydon."

The Old Man was pleased as Punch. He stretched out his arms and smiled all round.

"I believe I'd like to be a sailor," he said. "It's a wholesome life. I like to be doing something."

We took this as our cue and tried to get him to confess that he *had* done something. Perkins would call to mind his forty years in legitimate, harp on the Great Croydon of *Macbeth*, allude to the

tributes of the press, and so on. It was useless. He didn't come to the mark. He wouldn't even hold a rehearsal when it was fine. Miss Tyndall cried and said she'd give a week's salary to hear just once the old "Rehearsal at 10 to-morrow, my dear, and try to play up to me."

Instead he mooned on deck, with his great arms folded across his chest, his iron-gray hair ruffled by the wind, his sullen face lighted by a childish pleasure. And the Little Girl, basely deserting us, sat on a coil of rope by the wheel and smiled at him as if she were in love.

Something went wrong with the engines the second week out, and the captain remarked that he hoped the wind would hold fair, as we couldn't get up steam if we wanted to.

"The boilers have gone back on us," he said.

As we had been sailing most of the time, anyway, that didn't bother us except that we feared we should not reach Honolulu by our opening date. The captain reassured us, and said it meant not more than one day's delay.

"I was going to steam in as soon as we sighted land," he said. "Maybe the engineer can get some repairs made by the time we are ready for him."

Croydon ought to have raged day and night at such a *contretemps*. Instead, he was pleased. The next week went slowly. It was hot and there was nothing to do but stew over our parts and try to keep our appetites. It was glad news when the captain announced that we ought to sight land the next day.

"With a fair breeze we'll be in Honolulu by the sixteenth," he said.

We were to open on that date and we all began talking about prospects, except the Little Girl. She sat and smiled dreamily. Croydon, quite animated for a while, gradually fell thoughtful and seemed to have forgotten "The Vigilante" and the tour.

It blew hard the next day and by nightfall, when the captain said he saw a light, it was windy as you please. I turned into my bunk quite thankful that morning would see us well in towards Honolulu.

But it wasn't morning when I wak-

ened. It was pitch dark and I was thrown out of my bunk by an awful crash and jar. As I ran out of my room a wave slopped down the stairway and went all over me. I got on deck and saw what had happened. We were wrecked on a reef which we had run upon bow first.

I was afraid to go back and get my clothes, so I stood there by the deserted wheel and listened to the slapping of the sails, the pounding of the ship on the rocks, and the occasional shout from forward where the seamen were at work. I observed that the spray was very warm, much warmer than the wind. On both hands I saw breakers gleaming white against the general murk.

Perkins, who had stopped to dress, soon joined me. We found our situation on the high after-deck rather dangerous owing to the constant tumble of the ship and the wash of the waves. But it was as good as we could do, and we decided to wait till the captain came and told us where to go. Perkins was quite exercised about the Little Girl, but she appeared with Miss Tyndall before we could get below and find them.

Then the question rose, "Where is Croydon?"

Very suddenly the wind went down and left us with only the rush of the breakers in our ears. The sails swung in limp tatters from the masts and the steam from the whistle, which was sounding, sailed right up into the darkness. The schooner gradually heeled over and slipped, I judge, into a crevice in the rocks, for she quit tumbling and, apart from a tremor, was quite steady. I heard the captain's voice ahead, and almost at once he appeared at the foot of the steps leading upon the poop. He saw us all gathered there—it was growing light—and nodded, as much as to say, so far, so good. Then he and the mate and the engineer busied themselves over the boats. Still no Croydon; and Perkins went over and asked the captain about him. I could not hear his answer, but Perkins came back and said the Old Man was on the forecastle head helping the second mate.

He told this to the little girl waiting with her arm about Miss Tyndall, who was crying into a hat she had brought up



"I glanced around and saw the little girl standing up"

with her. Then we all settled down to hope.

After a half hour's work the captain came and told us to get ready to jump into the boat with the mate.

"We'll just pull over the reef," he said, "and then you'll be in smooth water clear to the beach. We'll have to leave the vessel; she's breaking up."

We crawled down the sloping deck to where the boat was ready to launch. The mate and the sailors put Miss Tyndall into it, the Little Girl climbed in herself, and then Perkins got in and the sailors hoisted the boat up, swung it out, and lowered away into the water. It pulled away vigorously, and the captain then got the other boat over and the engineer and I went in it with two other sailors. We had good luck, and before I realized it we were tossing in comparatively smooth water about thirty yards from the vessel's bow.

The moon sailed out from the clouds and right in the spot-light we saw the Great Croydon. He was standing on the high forecastle with his legs spread apart and his huge hands grasping a rope attached to a third boat which the other sailors were lowering over the rail. We saw the captain run up beside him and then go to the boat and put his hands on it to steady it as it swung up.

Something broke, for just as it was swinging out and the sailors were climbing into it the bow slipped downward and tumbled them all out into the surf. The next wave lifted the boat up and jammed it against the schooner's bow.

Some one in our boat grunted. "That finishes them."

But it didn't. The Great Croydon threw himself forward, caught the broken end of the rope and actually pulled that boat up till it swung evenly again, with the sailors hanging to the gunwales. Just then another big breaker came over the stern, filled the decks with foam and washed clean over the forecastle-head. When we cleared our eyes from the spray the third boat was floating half filled with water not far from us and five men were in it. There were still two figures on the forecastle-head.

It was the Great Croydon with a man half in his arms.

The mate stood up and yelled. "Jump!" Then he sat down and said savagely, "The captain's hurt. Pull up closer and we'll get him."

Croydon stepped out to the very angle of the bow, one foot on the bowsprit. He had picked the captain right up into his arms. The mate yelled, "Jump!" again and Croydon smiled. There was a chorus of cries from the three boats and we saw that we couldn't get any closer.

A huge cliff of a comber was climbing upward and soaring toward the wreck. We knew that it would finish everything. The Great Croydon turned his head. He saw it, too. Then the boats all started pulling away from the schooner to avoid being swamped.

At that instant Croydon heaved himself up and flung out his arms. The captain's body swept out in a great arc and fell into the water right beside us. A sailor caught his jacket and pulled him in. Then we all looked to see how Croydon would jump.

But Croydon was on one knee, his arms still flung out, his face turned to us, his eyes shining. Right above his head hissed a tremendous breaker like a dark, shadowy proscenium-arch.

The mate whistled between his teeth: "Look," he cried, "he's thrown his shoulders out of joint—he can't move!"

The Great Croydon smiled. His voice rolled out, "Farewell, Friends! Kind, Good Friends, Farewell!" the old stage roar.

In the silence, under that wall of water, I heard from the next boat a sharp clapping of hands. I glanced around and saw the Little Girl, standing up and smiling at the Great Croydon.

He saw her, I am sure. He heard that last "hand," the final applause of him. He leaned forward, bowing. He made a little gesture with his two useless arms; a tragic, theatric, splendid attempt to waft a kiss to the Little Girl—

Old Man Marlow, still staring out the window at the wet, dreary landscape, murmured, "Exit?"

"Curtain," said the Juvenile, briefly.

Mrs. O'Hara's Ambition

BY CORNELIA BAKER

ILLUSTRATED BY HORACE TAYLOR

Y IS, MĀ'AM, our town is having its sicond boom, and wages is high," remarked Mrs. Grady, contentedly smoothing her new cotton gloves, "and that is why I'm thryin' to influnce me niece to go back home wid me. There's a chanst there for a cliver woman to rise in the world, though few cud come up to me frind Mrs. O'Hara, for 'twas the ambition of her was ready to take her to anny lingth.

"A widdy at thirty-nine, Mrs. O'Hara was, be raison of Jawn O'Hara steppin' down through an elevator shaft and out of the world at the same toime, and his widdy left wid nawthing but a bright eye, a nate ankle, and five childher.

"Manny a toime have I heard Jawn O'Hara wishin' some wan wud die and lave him a fortune, and it was a lucky man he was, for he wasn't in his grave over two months befoor he got his wish; Tim Murphy, his wife's brother, dyin' in Australy, left siventy thousand dollars behind him, no less, which bein' on-married and wid tin brothers and sisters made Mrs. O'Hara's share aisy to reckon, being siven thousand dollars.

"The agent callin' for the rint the marnin' after the money was paid to her, Mrs. O'Hara says careless and in-



"We wore no wraps, but wint in our figures"

depindunt, 'Nixt month bein' the first of May, Mr. Sullivan, I'm thinkin' of takin' other quarthers.'

"I'm sorra to hear ut, Mrs. O'Hara," he says, "for your flat was always so nate and kep' in such good condition it's a pleasure to come into ut. Look at that stove now, ye can see yer face in ut; and that table as white as snow. But I'll not give ye up as a tinant; if ut's a ch'aper flat ye are wantin' there's one in the top flure back—"

"Ch'aper is ut?" says Mrs. O'Hara wid a toss of the head. "'Tis a grander place

I'm wantin', more suited to me rise in life,' she says, 'be raison uv me fortune from Australy.'

"'Twas astonished he was whin he found she'd siven thousand dollars in the bank, and he says, 'Mrs. O'Hara, ye'll be wantin' to invist your money so ut will be turnin' over and over and makin' ve more. Real estate in this town is on the boom, and what ye want is a piece uv property that'll kape on risin' and make ye a rich woman.'

"She was a high stepper, was Kate O'Hara, and the notion uv ownin' property uv her own was intirely to her taste, and she says, 'Ye'll excuse me, Mr. Sullivan, but the invistment uv money is a

solemn thing, and I'll not talk about ut to a rint-collector, but wid the biggest man in your firm,' she says.

"Mrs. O'Hara, I'm not blamin' ye," says Sullivan. "Come down to-morra marnin' and talk ut over wid Mr. Jackson, who'll give ye all the advice ye nadie, for nawthin' at all."

"Mrs. O'Hara came to me that same night and says she, 'Mrs. Grady, I want ye to do me a favor. I'm goin' down to Meeker & Morrison's to-morra at tin, and I want company, be raison of Jawn so lately in his grave and me goin' to an offus uv strange min all be me lone might have a strange look,' she says.

"'Tis proud I'll be to be your chaperown, Mrs. Grady,' I says, 'for ye're like a slip uv a gurl in spite uv your thirty-nine years and your five childher, but 'tis mesilf wid me size and me dignity wud lind propriety to a party on a tally-ho coach,' I says.

"So the next marnin' we put on our best clothes, and the day bein' extry warrum fur the toime uv year we wore no wraps but wint in our figures—to me own regret fur I always fale more iligunt in a shawl.

"Meeker & Morrison's offus was in a big buildin' and the min in ut was all ayther in a pen like pigs, or in cages like canary birds. Mr. Jackson opened a little dure lettin' us inside uv the pen, givin' us chairs ferninst his own desk. He was a small man wid eyes like black beads, and 'twas mesilf he smiled at wid a stretch uv lip that showed a full set uv good teeth, thinkin' I was the owner of the fortune, which did seem more reasonable, me havin' more the look uv it. But whin he found 'twas Mrs. O'Hara that had the money 'twas small use he had fur me at all!

"Here is a beautiful home fur siven thousand dollars," he says showin' her a fotygraft.

"Not fur me," she says. "All the money in a home wid nawthing to kape it up! What good," she says, "is a ruf over your head if there's nawthing doing on the kitchen-stove?"

"Ye're a practical woman, Mrs. O'Hara," he answers laughin'. "Now, here's some lots that'll be advancin' in

vally in a way that'll make your eyes jump."

"And us starvin' while they're advancin'," she says. "No! I've always thought I wud like to run a *hotil*, Mr. Jackson, and if ye've something uv the kind fur sale I'll go wid me frind and look at ut."

"Siven thousand dollars is not a great deal uv money, Mrs. O'Hara," he says in soothin' tones, "and I don't know uv wan ye cud buy for ut. But here, he says, handin' her another fotygraft, 'is a fine flat buildin' fur twilve thousand dollars.'

"And me wid but sivin'," says Mrs. O'Hara wid her eye on the fotygraft.

"Your money wud buy the equity," he says.

"She wud want the whole house or none; she cudn't rint the equity," I says, thinkin' he had riference to the front porch.

"Thin he explained that there was owin' five thousand dollars that the man wudn't want fur years to come, and wid a lot of figures he explained how durin' that toime she cud, wid the rental, put by enough to pay what was owin' and at the ind uv the toime have a clear buildin'."

"And wid the boom in this town," he says, "if ut aint worth a good dale more be that toime than 'tis now, I'll be willin' to swally this desk," which would not have been aisly, the desk bein' the size uv the house I was born in in Kildare, and him bein' a thin man.

"And I shudn't wonder," he says, "that whin ut is clear uv debt ye can trade ut fur a little *hotil* and get your wish afther all, Mrs. O'Hara!"

"Mrs. O'Hara said she wud like to see the flat buildin," and he took us both to ut, payin' the car-fare most polite. The place had been flatttered be the fotygraft, and there was wan flat vacant, but Mr. Jackson talked it up so well that the bargain was struck thin and there, and in two weeks' toime the O'Haras themselves were livin' in the vacant flat.

"Ivrything wint on most beautiful fur a while, and Mrs. O'Hara was continted, bein' in a way a landlady, which was what she'd always been cravin' to be.



"She culdn't rint the equity," I says thinkin' he had reference to the front porch"

The childher wint to school regular, Kathleen larned Frinch, Judy the piany and Tim took lessons on the fiddle uv Professor Joachima, who thought he was a wonder. But the very first Winter a poipe in that flat buildin' busted and leaked down through the flure, and not only did Mrs. O'Hara have a turrible plumber's-bill to pay, but she must pay damages to the man who run the clothing-store underneath the busted poipe, fur he said ut had made a rooned man uv him. Thin some people in the top flat c'u'dn't pay the rint, and Mrs. O'Hara, bein' tinder-hearted, trusted thim and they wint out in the night, and another fam'ly in the most expensive flat wint away at the ind uv the year, and so ut wint on, wid niver a cint laid away to rejuce the margage.

"Afther a while the bottom busted out uv the property-boom and thin ye cudn't give away a piece that was in debt, and

what shud happen but the owner uv the margage shud get the whole buildin', his five thousand dollars countin' fur more nor Mrs. O'Hara's siven, though I niver cud understand ut, and don't to this day!

"But Mrs. O'Hara was a cheerful woman and not wan to give up. 'Sure I've larned a lesson, Mrs. Grady,' she says, 'that'll last me all me life. Niver, niver will I take a man's advice about property so long as I'm alive.'

"Ye're not likely to have anything to take advice about,' I says, 'seein' Tim Murphy's not likely to die the second toime and lave ye a fortune.'

"Ye don't know,' she says, 'what may happen, and I've a notion that I will be afther dyin' rich. Anyhow, the mother uv such a fam'ly can niver be poor, and 'twill do no good to cry me eyes out over spilt milk.'

"The man that now owned the buildin' took possession, and not bein' able to

pay the rint he asked, Mrs. O'Hara had to look fur other quarthers. 'Twas meself was there fur supper whin she came home, tired but cheerful, from her search, and be the look uv her ye'd have thought she'd been buyin' a mansion.

"Ye sha'n't tell us a word, mother, till ye've had your tea," says Kathleen, who is a kind and thoughtful gurl, and as soon as we'd all finished, Mrs. O'Hara says, "Now guess all av yez where we're goin' to live."

"And so we comminced guessin"—me wid all the small flats I cud think uv, the older childher wid betther wans, and little Aileen, the baby, fetchin' up wid the risidence of ould Symonds, the millionaire.

"Ye'd niver guess in a thousand years," says Mrs. O'Hara laughin' and her eyes sparklin'. "I've rinted "The Queen's Taste" for three years," she says.

"The Queen's Taste!" screamed the childher, while I said, "Hivens above, Kate O'Hara, is ut out uv your mind ye are intirely?"

"Ye can aisy understand why we felt so much surprise whin I explain. Whin the town was at the middle uv its boom, a twilve story *hotil* was comminced and everybody was proud uv it, since 'twas goin' to be the han'somest buildin' in the state. Ye niver passed there while they were at work on ut that ye didn't see a crowd uv min and boys standin' watchin' the derricks go up and down, as intherested as if 'twas their own property. And sure 'twas a grand thing, the top uv the dure bein' hild up be a pair of sly lookin' marble women—katydids they call them—and 'twas said that the parlors were to be papered wid flowered satin! The rale name uv the place was the "Grand Cintral *Hotil*," but somebody remarkin' that 'twud be a *hotil* to the queen's taste, 'twas called that by 'most ivrybody. Whin the boom stopped the buildin' uv the *hotil* stopped, and there 'twas, six stories high wid a ruf over ut to kape out the weather. So ye can see why we all screamed whin Mrs. O'Hara said she'd rinted The Queen's Taste.

"But 'tis not finished yet," says Kathleen.

"'Tis built high enough fur us," says her mother, "and 'tis pretty well done on the inside, though the walls are not papered."

"There's six stories—I've counted thim," says little Patrick, "a story apiece fur us. Gee!" he says.

"Well, Kate O'Hara," I says, "ye've always wished fur a *hotil* and ye've got yer wish wid a vingence, but how ye're to pay the rint, to say nawthing uv kapin' the place clane, Hivin knows, fur I don't!"

"What rint d'y'e guess I've agreed to pay?" she asks, her eyes dancin'."

"A thousand dollars a week," says Patrick, befoor anny wan else cud give a guess, and, indade, we'd no mind to try.

"Let me tell me story, and everybody kape quiet till I'm through," says Mrs. O'Hara, "and thin you wont think me so crazy as ye do now. I'd tramped around fur hours tryin' to find something that wud suit me taste and me pocketbook at the same toime, and sure thim two things is always quarrelin', and havin' no success I wint to Meeker & Morrison's."

"Thin Mrs. O'Hara wint on to tell how she met Sullivan at the dure uv the offus, and lost no toime in tellin' him what her business was.

"Mrs. O'Hara," says he, "I was thinkin' uv ye no longer nor this very day. I've niver forgot how nate ye used to kape yer little place whin I used to collect your rint, wid niver a spot on the walls. I've been talkin' over a sartin schame wid Mr. Jackson, and I'll be afther referrin' ye to him," he says.

"And what does he do but take her to the same man, bad cess to him, that had ricommended the buyin' uv the flat-buildin'?

"How are ye, Mrs. O'Hara," says he smooth as butter. "We've been thinkin' that ye'd be the very wan to live in the Grand Cintral *Hotil*."

"And meself afther a small flat!" she says. "Sure the six uv us wud rattle around in the Grand Cintral like a handful of peas in a cask," she says.

"He tould her 'twas wantin' some wan to take care uv the place they were, and that the O'Hara fam'ly cud cook and

ate in the kitchen and that there was a small sweet on the second flure they cud sleep and live in. They cud lock up the rest uv ut, he said, goin' through ut wance in a while to see that ut was all right. Some wan, he said, must live there on account uv the insurance, and the owner who was lavin' town was wantin' to have the matter settled.

"Mr. Jackson," says Mrs. O'Hara, when he'd finished, "tis a proud woman I am, and havin' had property uv me

ut, though whin you walked through the upper hall there was a roar like a thrain uv cars, owin' to the imptness uv ut. Mrs. O'Hara said that though 'twas a vexation to a good housekeeper to know that there were hundreds of windas in her residince that naded washin' still it was worth something not to feel cramped.

"Kathleen was tachin' school, and Judy, bein' handy wid her fingers, had got a place wid a milliner, and they were gettin' along somehow whin goold



"Tim took lessons on the fiddle"

own I'd hate to descind to the level uv a caretaker,' says she. 'If ye'll lease the *hotil* to me for three years at a dollar a month and promise not to tell what I'm payin' I'll take ut.'

"And thin he done some 'phonin' and wrote out some leases to be signed.

"And here's mine," says Mrs. O'Hara takin' ut from her black bag.

"Twas two weeks later that I wint to see them in their new home, and most snug and comfortable was their part uv

was found in the Klondike and thousands were on their way to the could North. I called at The Queen's Taste one afthernoon, and what does Mrs. O'Hara say but, 'Mrs. Grady, I'm going to run this place as a *hotil*!'

"The saints presarve us!" I says. "The *hotil*-notion is wan that's fastened tight in your head, and nawthing but dinnamite will drive it out at all!"

"The other *hotils* wont be able to hold all the travelers that will be comin'

through on their way to Alasky and we can take care uv the overflow,' she says.

" 'Tis a small overflow ye can accommodate in your wan spare bed,' I says.

" 'I've arranged,' she says, 'to buy furniture for the ofus and a dozen other rooms on toime, and annything else I'll have to have will be paid fur in the same way.'

" Wid Kate O'Hara 'twas to say and do and Queen's Taste was open to the public. She hired a man cook, and a good wan he was, and a porter to take care uv the baggage, and the rest uv the work was done be the fam'ly, Kathleen and Judy quittin' their other occypations, and aven Patrick and Aileen makin' themselves useful, and 'twas not long befoor me, bein' a widdy meself and widout chil-dher, was hired to tind the bed-rooms and kape the place clane.

" Thin what does that man Jackson do but sind word to Mrs. O'Hara that he must see her at his offus. 'Write him that 'tis very busy I am,' she says to Kathleen, 'and that I've no toime to be runnin' to offuses.'

" Thin Mr. Jackson comes himself, smooth and smilin'.

" 'We are now ready to relave ye uv the *hotil*, Mrs. O'Hara,' says he.

" 'That's kind uv ye, Mr. Jackson, but I'm not wantin' the relafe,' says she.

" 'But the owner wants ut,' he says.

" 'Thin there's two uv us uv the same mind. I want ut meself,' she says.

" 'I'm afraid ye'll have to give ut up,' he says.

" 'What's the matter wid ye, Mr. Jackson?' she says. 'Don't ye get the rint reg'lar and at the tap of the drum in advance?'

" 'The rint, oh the rint is nawthin',' and he laughed.

" 'Tis a dollar more a month nor ye asked me in the first place,' says Mrs. O'Hara.

" 'But the lease,' he says. 'Don't ye know what ye signed, Mrs. O'Hara?'

" 'Sure I do,' she says. 'Wan deal in real estate cut me wisdom-teeth intirely.'

" 'Well,' he says, payin' no attintion to her remark, 'the lease does not say that the place is to be run as a *hotil*.'

" 'Nor is ut sayin' that I'm *not* to run

ut as a *hotil*,' she answers, quick as a flash. 'Ut says that Mary Catharine O'Hara has rinted the primises known as the Grand Cinthral *Hotil* and that she's to pay twilve dollars a year for the same, and what does annybody rint a *hotil* fur onless 'tis to run ut?' she says.

" 'Who in—creation thought ye'd want to make a *hotil* uv ut?' he says, cross, havin' lost all patience wid her. 'Ye came to our place fur a small flat, ye know ye did,' he says.

" 'I'm not denyin' ut, Mr. Jackson,' says she, 'but if ye cud have looked into the inside uv me mind ye'd have seen 'twas the drame uv me life to be a land-lady, and that the very word *hotil* was like hintin' to a cat that there's a mouse behind the dure,' she says.

" He rammed his two hands down dape into his pockets and stared out uv the winda as much as tin minutes widout a word, and thin says:

" 'Mrs. O'Hara, I'll give ye a thousand dollars fur your lease.'

" 'Tis kind ye are,' she says, 'but I've made more nor that since I comminded the business,' she says.

" Well, he kep' offerin' on up till he rached siven thousand dollars, thinkin' mebby that the sum might have a charm fur her, fur ould acquaintance's sake, ye might say, but she shut him up wid,

" 'Mr. Jackson, 'tis wastin' your toime ye are, fur I've the faver in me blood to run a big *hotil* and run ut I will as long as I've the right and nawthing can stop me.'

" 'Kate O'Hara,' I says, whin he was gone, 'tis yerself nades your head shaved and a mustard plaster put on ut! That's twice ye've had a chanst at siven thousand dollars; wance whin ut was in your fist, and now whin ut was as good as your own. If ye die in the infirm'ry ye've no wan to blame but yerself,' I says.

" 'We shall see,' she says, 'and insudentially, Mrs. Grady, there's beds upstairs that want makin'.'

" The Queen's Taste wint on in a quare way and sometimes whin I was afther scrubbin' the front porch, and stood lookin' at them katydids on ayther side uv the dure, I thought to meself

that they'd a knowin' look and that they was all but bustin' wid laughter. I can best give ye a notion uv what I mane by tellin' ye what a young man said that stopped on his way to the goold fields. 'Twas travelin' wid his uncle he was, and he'd a smile so plisunt that ye'd want to smile whin ye'd ketch his glance. The uncle was a man past fifty and fat, and wid little to say.

"They registered as Joseph Vernon and Felix Vernon from wan uv the big cities uv the East, and I overheard Mr. Felix, the young man, sayin' to the ould wan:

"I'm amazed at the startlin' incongrooties uv this remarkable hosselry. Look at the beautiful wood-work, see the hall flures, while the parlor furniture cudn't have cost more nor twenty-five dollars all told," he says. "The lofty dining-room," he says, "wid mahogany wainscoting is masquerading in an in-grain carpet and chairs uv painted wood, and a flight uv marble-stairs takes me to me own room, where I find but the barest need-cessities," he says. "And whin I asked fur the clerk, which in all other *hotils* is a hotty and overbearin' man," he says, "I was referred to wan uv the prettiest gurls I iver saw, be George," he says, "and if beauty counts fur annything, 'tis a princess in disguise she is. And me umbrella that I left in the hall was brought to me room be a pretty little gurl in white, wid long curls. Hearin' music on me way down-stairs, I stopped at an open dure, and who shud ut be but the bell-boy, who'd showed me to me room, playing wid a wrapped countenance the sublime strains uv Goonoo's 'Ave Maria' on his violin."

"What he mint be sayin' that Tim had his face wrapped, I don't know, fur I was askin' the boy aftherward if 'twas thtrue, or if he'd the toothache, and he said no.

"I was in the offus that same night wid Kathleen, restin' from me work, whin the young man intered. Kathleen was busy, for she was addin' up a long row of figures, and he waited till she was through, the two eyes uv him niver lavin' her face.

"I rang me bell three times but

'twas not answered,' he says, not lookin' a bit mad.

"I'm very sorra, sir," says Kathleen, "I thought Tim wint up."

"Tim," he says wid a twinkle in his eyes, "is engaged wid his fiddle."

"But I thought he wint to ye first," says Kathleen. "Ye see, sir, he is practicin' fur a concert, and while at all toimes his heart is wid his music, he is more absorbed in ut now than iver."

"The management uv this *hotil* is diff'runt from anny I've iver seen," goes on the young man wid his eyes on Kathleen's pretty face.

"The manager is me mother, sir," she says, nippin' him like a frost.

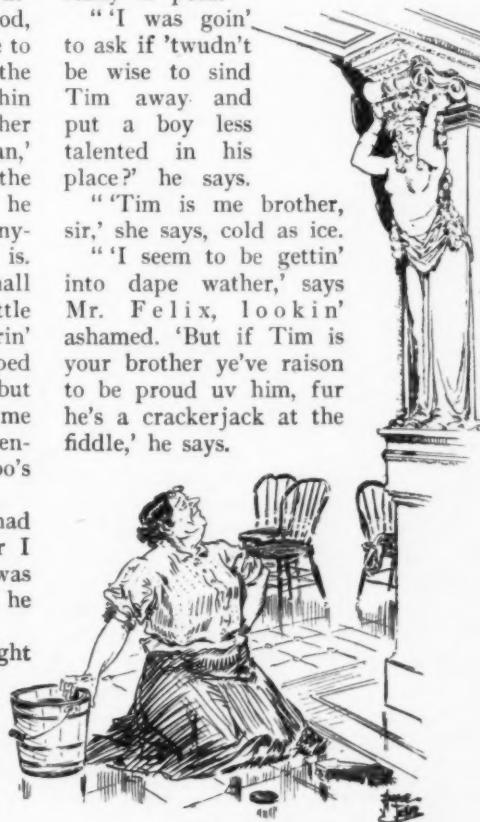
"Pray pardon me," says the young man wid a blush; "all I wanted was to make a sejestion."

"What sejestion wud ye make?" asks Kathleen, lookin' like a bright-eyed bird ready to peck.

"I was goin' to ask if 'twudn't be wise to sind Tim away and put a boy less talented in his place?" he says.

"Tim is me brother, sir," she says, cold as ice.

"I seem to be gettin' into dape wather," says Mr. Felix, lookin' ashamed. "But if Tim is your brother ye've raison to be proud uv him, fur he's a crackerjack at the fiddle," he says.



"They'd a knowin' look"



"Used to stay awhile to cheer him up"

"Kathleen was milder afther that and she says: 'Things don't run as they shud, I know, but we've only just begun. 'Tisn't much help that we can affoord, so the fam'ly does most uv ut; but if we kape the thrade we're havin' at prisint we'll soon be able to have whatever we want,' she says.

"The two Mr. Vernons left orders to be called fur the airy thrain, but they didn't take ut, be raison uv the ould gentleman wakin' up on-conscious wid a fever. Foor weeks was he down wid ut, and Kate O'Hara, whose heart is soft fur the sick, had him moved to a big corner room wid a bay winda, and two other rooms skinned uv most uv their furniture to make his comfortable, and whin he was able to relish his vittles the cook had instructions to make ivery little dainty he cud lay his hand to. And ivery day Mrs. O'Hara, who was always as nate as a pin in her dress, and her black hair as smooth as satin, used to go to see him and stay awhile to cheer him up, though 'twas busy she was at the toime.

"Whin the doctor pronounced Mr. Vernon well enough to travel, he says to his landlady: 'How wud ye like a silent pardner in your business, Mrs. O'Hara?'

"'A silent pardner wud be a blissing if he had money,' she says quick. 'I'm not denyin' that lately I've been passin' some onaisy nights. I'm afther furnishin' a lot more rooms wid more ilegance than the first wans, and they're not yet paid fur, and on top uv ut has come some unexpected expenses that's cramped me,' she says.

"'Mrs. O'Hara,' says Mr. Vernon, I'm thinkin' ye've a talent for the *hotil* business, and I'm willin' to put in some capital,' he says.

"And what does he do but offer to furnish all the rest uv the rooms, and lind her money beside, an offer that she snapped up in a hurry!

"The day the two Mr. Vernons left 'twas meself was out fur a mouthful of fresh air, whin who shud I meet but Mr. Jackson?

"'How are ye, Mrs. Grady?' he says

smilin' and friendly, 'tis yerself is a good frind to the O'Haras. Through fair weather and foul ye've stuck to them,' he says.

"Thru'e fur ye, sir, 'tis wan uv me charatheristics," I says.

"Ye're a sinsible woman, Mrs. Grady, a very sinsible woman," he goes on wid his eyes fixed on the tower uv a church a mile off.

"'Tis what Grady thought I was, es-pishully in me ch'ice uv a husbun," I says.

"Poor Mrs. O'Hara is in something uv a tight box, I hear," he says.

"Is she, indade?" says I.

"Didn't ye know ut? She's been bitin' off more nor she can chew, which is a bad plan and is liable to bring folks to grief," he says.

"It is," I says; "twas what she found out whin she bought her flat buildin', I says.

"Have ye heard annything about her bein' willin' to dispose uv the *hotil*?" he says.

"Niver a word sir," I says. "Wid her passion for con-dooctin' a *hotil* 'tis small chance The Queen's Taste has fur gettin' out uv Kate O'Hara's clutches," I says.

"Nobody knows, Mrs. Grady, what may happen," he says, "and yerself bein' a sinsible woman will advise Mrs. O'Hara to take whatever offer we can afford to make her."

"'Tis small attintion she'll pay to annybody but her silent pardner from now on, I'm thinkin'," I says.

"What d'ye mane?" he asks.

"'Tis ould Mr. Vernon that's been sick in the house

and is now gone away to make invistments for his nevvy in Alasky," I says. "'Tis as rich as Creesus the ould man is, and thinks no more uv tin thousand dollars thin I do of tin cints. He's put some of his money into the business."

"Mr. Jackson used some words I'd scorn to repeat, thin he wint on his way.

"The Queen's Taste wint on, and flourished in a way that was surprisin', and whin a year and a half later the two Mr. Vernons got back, it was a proud woman Kate O'Hara was whin she showed the ould wan how his money had more than thribbled.

"Sure it's a shame your lease ipxires inside uv a year," I says to Mrs. O'Hara that night whin she paid me me week's wages. "Ye'll not rint The Queen's Taste ag'in fur the same price, but I'm not doubtin' that ye'll take the money ye've made and buy a *hotil* out and out."

"No," she says, "the two Mr. Vernons wud not like fur us to run a *hotil* any longer."

"And what have the two Mr. Vernons to say about ut?" I asks.

"They are goin' to marry us," she says, lookin' down.

"Us," I says, shocked.

"Not you, Mrs. Grady," she says laughin', "but Mr. Felix is goin' to marry Kathleen and I'm thinkin' of takin' the uncle."

"The saints above!" I exclaims; "it's Kathleen's aunt and mother ye'll be at the same toime, and bein' Kathleen's aunt be marriage, ye'll be yer own sister-in-law. But ye're that ambitious I'm not surprised at annything ye'll accomplish, Kate O'Hara!"



Mr. Felix and Kathleen



The Mantle of Charity

BY CATHERINE THAYER

ILLUSTRATED BY HERMAN C. WALL

IT was inevitable that the heroine should remind Hendricks of the Dearest Girl in the World—she was so different. That is why he gathered up his hat and coat in the middle of the third act and, regardless of the disapproving glances of his neighbors, strode down the aisle to the accompaniment of the snapping epigrams which had been going off behind the footlights all the afternoon with the merciless, methodical iteration of a Gatling gun. The problem that confronted him tormentingly was not the solution of a dubious adventuress' indubitable relations with a well-tailored villain; it was how he, a mere man, with only the immaterial advantages of birth, breeding, and fortune to recommend him, should convince a slip of a girl with eyes like pansies that he was the only one in the world to whom she might safely confide an absurdly

small hand, with a palm like a shell-pink rose-leaf.

The clock in the lobby stood at half-past four as Hendricks slipped on his fur-lined ulster; and the upper windows of a towering skyscraper were flashing back their last ruddy challenge to the setting sun when he stepped out into the clangor of Broadway, and set his face southward toward Washington Square. It was one of those December days that seem to brim the cup of Winter with a heady, sparkling wine, which courses riotously through the veins of the prosperous and happy: but its dregs serve only to numb the hearts, and dull the eyes, and weight the feet of those who—warming themselves with the sight of other people's clothing, and stifling the pangs of hunger with the thought of other people's dinners—slink shivering through the careless, jostling crowd. To

Hendricks, the keen breath of the salt-tinged air was like a bugle-call to every racing drop of blood in his body, as, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and shouldering his way through the throng of holiday-shoppers, he measured off the blocks that lay between him and the quaint, old fashioned drawing-room where the Dearest Girl, and a fluted Colonial tea-pot, might, or might not, be waiting for his appearance.

Concerning the presence of the latter he was indifferent; it seemed to symbolize in its portly form the elaborate conventions which surrounded Her with an intangible barrier beyond which he dared not pass: and yet he knew in his heart that it was this very quality of aloofness from the frank comradeship of All the Other Girls, that gave to Gabrielle Du Bois the alluring charm of a dewy hedge-rose, secure on its thorny spray above the traveler's reach. Should he risk torn fingers before the perfumed petals were quite unclosed, or wait till the dust of the highway had soiled its freshness, and the heat of noonday had bent its stalk to his hand? This was the question that for the past three weeks had rung its changes through all the hours of his day; and which now seemed to dog his steps with a persistency no hurry could out-distance, as he threaded his way through the ever thickening crowd.

As he forced a passage in the maelstrom of humanity surging about the base of the Flatiron Building and emerged breathless into the comparative quiet of Fifth Avenue, he became conscious of a shabby, slouching figure walking beside him, whose footfalls timed themselves to his own with the rhythm of perfect good-fellowship, and whose threadbare sleeve brushed his with democratic familiarity while they stood waiting for a chugging behemoth to swing itself ponderously into the thoroughfare, at the shrill signal of a mounted policeman's whistle. At Twentieth Street they were still together, and Hendricks began to feel a dawning sense of irritation highly incompatible with the absorbing train of thought he had been following since breakfast-time. At Nineteenth Street he quickened his pace to that swinging gait which, in col-

lege-days, had won for him the title of "The Bandersnatch;" but finding the footsteps still echoed his own with persistent regularity, he stopped abruptly at the next corner, and turning round faced his pursuer with a suddenness that made the other reel in his tracks as he came to a halt beside him.

"I never employ a shadow after sundown," said Hendricks sharply, eyeing the figure before him with no friendly gaze. "Do you want anything of me, my friend, or did you merely select me as a pace-maker for the sake of getting up your circulation?"

The man gave a short laugh and raised his shoulders in a shrug that turned to a shiver as he spoke.

"I want something from you, all right," he answered tersely, "and I reckon you know what it is. But keep right on walking, governor; I left my furs at home, and it's too blamed cold to be standing about here!"

It was bitter cold. With the fall of dusk a teasing wind had sprung up that nipped the features of the passers-by and blew a cloud of whirling dust about the icy pavements, sending the newsboys scuttling into the shelter of vestibules and doorways, like frozen chaff before its breath. Hendricks was suddenly conscious of something almost grotesque in the contrast between himself and the man beside him. A chance toss of Fate, and he might have been walking in the other's shabby shoes; keeping his heart warm with hatred of the rich, and envying all those who, like himself, bore upon their persons the visible signs of prosperity and habitual good-living. With a whimsical smile he unbuttoned his ulster, and taking a roll of banknotes from an inner pocket, offered a dollar-bill to his silent companion who, still keeping his place at his side, took it without comment or apparent surprise.

"You might have mentioned the matter five blocks back," Hendricks suggested dryly. "An early reference to your wife, and five or ten children, would have saved considerable exertion."

The man's eyes narrowed, and a change came over his shrewd but not wholly unattractive face.

"You can drop that kind of talk," he said brusquely. "You've paid for the right to jaw at me, but you've no earthly call to drag *her* in. You see, she died two years back," he added more quietly. "I reckon she was some different from what you'd think she'd have been."

"I beg your pardon," said Hendricks quickly.

"I'm down on my luck," the other went on slowly, "but I aint so low as that. There aint no children either; just me and nobody else. But one starving man's mighty unhandy to have round; and it aint no fun, I can tell you, when you're it."

"Out of work?" Hendricks questioned, with a sense of wonder at his own interest in this floating waif of the city's flotsam and jetsam that had chanced to drift his way.

A gleam of quizzical humor lighted the man's eyes for a moment and then died blankly out.

"If I was you, and you was me," he said meditatively, "I reckon I'd ask that question just like you did, and be just as sorry and surprised that everybody wasn't warm, and rich, and good-looking like me. No, I aint got work," he added with a sinister change of tone.

"Did you ever stop to think what that would mean if you stood in shoes like mine? Did you ever think what it must feel like to walk the streets hungry and see other folks sleek and fat? Or walk the streets with your blood turning to ice, and warm your back with the sight of how other men keep comfortable? I tell you the preachers is way off who talk about hell-fire," he laughed bitterly. "There's only cold and hunger needed in that place."

He opened his hand and looked at the bill he held crushed in the palm; then he thrust it back into his trousers-pocket with a shiver.

"I reckon you don't know how big that looks to me," he said. "It means the chance to get out of this, and start back to heaven. There's just the two old folks left there; it aint much of a place to look at, as places go. Just a little old Delaware farm-house with a red gabled end, and a well-sweep back in the yard;

and a spavined plug of a sorrel horse they named after me; and a dozen raggedy acres of corn."

He slackened his pace and came to a halt as they neared the arch, his face showing pinched and haggard in the gathering darkness.

"You've treated me white; blamed white," he said over his shoulder as he turned on his heel. "I reckon you don't want no cut and dried thanks passed out to you to spoil the taste of that in your mouth."

Bruce Hendricks never mounted the eight steps of Miss Elvira Augusta Kenworthey's mansion without feeling that he lost two years of his age at every tread. It was never he himself who pressed the electric-bell at which the griffin door-knocker looked so contemptuously askance, but "Hendy" Hendricks, the Columbia freshman, going to pay his first duty-call on an awe-inspiring relative, who felt privileged to ask him embarrassingly direct questions concerning his class-standing, and the weight of his flannels; and who seemed equally dissatisfied with an average of seventy-six per cent, and a mixture of one-third wool to two-thirds cotton.

The illusion of youthful inexperience was further enhanced by the respectful condescension of Porson, whose forty years of service in the Kenworthey household entitled him to open the front door as if he were thereby removing the last barrier between his mistress and the iconoclastic spirit of the age; and who received a visitor's coat and hat with a tolerant lift of the eyebrows, which conveyed more clearly than words a disparaging comparison of their cut and style with those of the vintage of '68.

A moment later Hendricks found himself in the drawing-room, and seated upon the same divan that the youthful Hendy had selected as the least impossible of all the depressingly gorgeous and rigidly uncomfortable chairs which had adorned, without the least furnishing, that stately apartment since the days of Zachary Taylor. On the occasion of his first visit everything had been swathed in yellow tarlatan, or primly buttoned into fluted coverings; and the grown up

Hendy could never banish from his consciousness the fact that to Miss Kenworthey the coming of Spring meant only the advent of starched holland; while the countryside's last flaming challenge to encroaching Winter but heralded the period when crystal chandeliers

his feet with a firm conviction that the sun was rising gloriously in the East, and that the haunting shadows of Want and Misery had vanished before her presence like the last dissolving clouds in an April sky..

It was so wonderful an experience to



"Did you ever think what that would mean if you stood in shoes like mine?"

and family portraits might safely emerge from the chrysalis-stage of existence.

It was an extraordinary tribute to the personality of the Dearest Girl in the World that she could instantly transform this arid desert into a blooming oasis of life-refreshing verdure; for, as she entered the room, Hendricks rose to

find himself actually taking the hand she offered him into his own broad palm; so very wonderful to discover that he still retained sufficient control over himself to surrender it after an impersonally brief pressure; so beatific a wonder to see her ensconced behind the tea-tray, which Porson had borne in and set down

before her with the air of one who heaps coals of fire on the heads of a perverse generation; and so overwhelmingly wonderful to find that she remembered he always took two pieces of sugar.

It was also the prettiest sight in the world to watch her rearranging the tray with little feminine touches which made Porson's attempts seem barbarously clumsy; or measuring out the tea into the fluted Colonial pot, and nodding her adorable head the while to mark time to her whispered counting; or filling the egg-shell cups and placing them in a gratefully steaming half-circle before her; or peering into the excited kettle and repriming it with a bewitching pout for its slowness in boiling.

To see all this, and yet maintain a discreet silence in regard to the emotions it excited within him, was almost beyond Hendricks' powers of endurance: even the family portraits looked sympathetic as they stared down at him from their tarnished frames; while the warm-hearted tea-kettle, losing all control of itself, at last boiled over with a noisy exuberance that set the alcohol flame to flaring wildly for a second, before it went out with a protesting sputter at being thus ruthlessly banished from the scene.

"Do you know," said the Dearest Girl, as she meditatively stirred her tea, "that two very strange things have happened to me to-day? In the first place, I started out by being eighteen years old—quite a grown-up woman Aunt Augusta says—and I've been wondering ever since I got up, whether I'm really to like it or not.

"You see," she continued slowly, a wistful light creeping into the pansy eyes as she spoke, "it's a little hard to be a woman, when you've never had any chance to be a girl. Not a little girl, I mean; but a real girl like some of those I've read about. I should have so loved to be like them," she sighed; "like Miss Alcott's Jo, and Meg, and Amy, you know—they were such dears! But then, you see, I've never really known any people well; excepting Aunt Augusta, and the sisters at the convent; and she never let me visit or go away vacations as the others did; only just come to her

for a few weeks each fall at the farm, where there wasn't any one to talk to or make friends with.

"But now that I've really left the convent, you can't think how different she's been the last three weeks; and she told me this morning that I'm to be formally brought out in January. There's to be the biggest kind of a reception and dance at the St. Regis, and a series of dinners and theatre-parties; and I'm to take riding-lessons, and bridge-lessons, and have stacks of the loveliest clothes, and a maid all to myself, and—and—oh, do you think I'll like it?" she ended in sudden appeal. "It makes me feel so lonely, somehow, and—frightened!"

"I'm afraid you'll enjoy it only too much," answered Hendricks, with a sudden pang at the mental vision of this dewy hedge-rose soiled, and drooping, under the pitiless midday sun.

"Afraid?" she echoed reproachfully.

"I mean," he stammered, "I mean—No, of course I don't mean that! Who could see you for even an hour without longing to give you pleasure? You needn't be afraid people won't be good to you, Miss Du Bois. It's only—only that I'm a little selfish, perhaps. These three weeks I've known you have meant so much to me; and when you have many friends about you, I'm afraid I may be crowded out; and Porson will refuse to let me find you in when I call, and snub me as he used to do when I was a boy."

"Oh, but you're not a friend—you're a connection!" said the Dearest Girl reassuringly. "That's why Aunt Augusta has let you come here to see me, you know. She says family connections don't count, because—

"Why what are you laughing at?" she asked in astonishment.

"I'm not quite sure," replied Hendricks ruefully. "Perhaps it's relief at finding I'm not on the precarious footing of mere friendship; and so, whatever happens, can always retain the enviable distinction of being a—connection! And what was the second strange thing that happened to you to-day, Miss Du Bois? Was it as exciting as the first?"

The puzzled look faded from her eyes, and a tinge of fear crept into their violet

depths. "It was so wonderful," she answered softly, "that until I spoke to you just now I had forgotten all about my birthday, and the dance, and the clothes. So very, very wonderful, that it seems as if nothing could ever be quite the same to me again; for I begin to understand something of how strange a place this big, beautiful, cruel world is, Mr. Hendricks; and for a few moments I seemed to be carried quite outside myself and my little troubles, and to stand face with—Life!" She spoke the last word softly—reverently—almost as a child might speak of Death, while the shadow in her eyes wavered and deepened as if with unshed tears.

"You know Aunt Augusta is interested in lots of charities, and after luncheon I drove down with her to the Aid Building, so that I could carry the executive-books up-stairs to the office, and find out what time Tompkins should call for her. There was some sort of a collision between a cable-car and a truck while I was inside, and our carriage had driven farther down the street to get out of the way of the crowd. One of the truck-horses had been dreadfully hurt, poor thing, and just as I reached the sidewalk, a policeman drew his revolver and shot him twice.

"I couldn't help screaming and putting my hands over my ears; and I was a little frightened, too, there was such a noisy, pushing crowd all about me: but the moment he spoke to me I remembered he had been standing near the steps when we went in—such a shabby, discouraged acting man, and yet somehow rather decent looking.

"He stepped up to me at once, touching his hat quite civilly.

"Your carriage is waiting round the corner, miss," he said; "you'd better let me help you through the crowd, for it's a deal too cold for you to be standing here."

"You'll think me very childish, Mr. Hendricks, but do you know, I'd never stopped to think—until he spoke and I saw him shivering—that everyone wasn't glad to have this glorious zero weather. I don't know what there was about his expression, but all of a sudden I felt per-

fectedly *ashamed* of my fur coat and heavy boots—and I wanted to tell him so! He didn't wait for me to answer, but began pushing aside the people to make a path for me; and I followed close behind until we came to a place where they were rolling barrels down a chute into a cellar, and of course we couldn't get by till they stopped. He motioned me to step into a doorway, and came and stood close beside me; shivering all the while until it nearly broke my heart.

"And I began to think perhaps he had a family, and they were cold and hungry, too—Oh, it was perfectly dreadful! It seemed to come over me all at once, like a great wave sweeping me off my feet, that it wasn't right, that it wasn't *fair*, for me to be so well cared for, while others were so poor and wretched.

"Suddenly he turned and spoke, but still without looking at me.

"I can't bear to see a horse killed," he said, "especially a sorrel horse. I reckon it's because I was raised with one, on the farm where I used to live. He was named after me, poor old chap; I thought a heap of him."

"Don't you live there any more?" I asked.

"He looked at me in the strangest way before answering.

"I left home twenty years ago," he said. "I ran away just at Christmas-time; there's only the two old people left there now. You wouldn't think it was much of a place, miss, if you could see it: Just a little old Delaware farm-house, with a red gabled end, and a dozen raggedy acres of corn—but I reckon I'd rather be there than in heaven; I wouldn't ask anything better if I was king!"

"Then why don't you go?" I couldn't help asking.

"But I was sorry I did, for his face changed at once, and such a hard, angry light came into his eyes.

"Have you ever been cold and hungry, miss?" he said, with a laugh that hurt almost as if he'd struck me. "Have you ever been so poor that you envied the dogs in the gutters, and the sparrows under the eaves? Don't you suppose I'd give the heart out of my body for a chance to start straight again, and end



Hendricks threw his arms about her

"my days in Delaware where I was born?"

"And then the wonderful thing happened," said the Dearest Girl tremulously, while the corners of her mouth quivered like those of a child. "For all of a sudden I began to understand what Life really means, Mr. Hendricks; I understood why all aren't born alike in

the world; but some are so rich and fortunate. It isn't to make them selfish; it's only so that they can learn to help those who aren't prosperous and happy like themselves."

She clasped and unclasped her hands nervously, while the pansy eyes swam, drowned under a haze of tears.

"I suppose it's because I'm really a woman that I understand so well," she said softly. "I'm going to remember it always, *always*, deep down in my soul of souls."

"Did you give this man anything?" Hendricks asked gravely, the suspicion in his mind growing to a certainty as the face of his late companion on the avenue rose more clearly behind him.

She nodded her head in answer, while the tear-mist lifted from her eyes.

"I had my purse in my muff, with the birthday money in it that Aunt Augusta had given me. I didn't say anything but I took out the ten dollar bill and slipped it into his hand. He looked so surprised at first, I was afraid perhaps he wouldn't take it; but after a second he drew a long breath, and crushing it in his hand put it deep down in his pocket.

"I reckon you don't know how big that looks to me, miss," he said. "It means the chance to get out of hell, and back to heaven."

"Just then I saw Tompkins driving down to the Aid Building, so I waved my muff for him to stop; but when I turned to look for the man he'd disappeared in the crowd, and I couldn't see him anywhere. It was almost as if the whole thing were only a dream; almost as if he'd been sent to make me understand what Life can mean, you know; and on the very day I'd grown to be a woman. Do you suppose—

"Oh, it's Bruce, is it?" said a clear cut voice in the doorway; and to that individual's infinite annoyance Miss Elvira Augusta Kenworthey, with a dapper middle-aged man in tow, swept majestically into the drawing-room.

"How d'ye do? I rather thought I'd find you here. Gabrielle, this is Mr. Perkins, the only man in New York who can lead a cotillion properly, and who has promised yours shall be a perfect success. Now, for heaven's sake, Peter, shake hands with the child if you want to, but don't waste time trying to be polite! I want her to light the kettle at once and make us some fresh tea, for I'm nearly perished with cold, and can't be kept waiting a moment.

"You'll never be a ladies' man, Bruce," she commented dispassionately, as with his assistance she struggled out of her fur-lined wrap, emerging from its folds as ample of line and gorgeous of upholstery as the chair into which she sank with a groan of fatigue. "You're just as unhandy as your grandfather was, my dear boy, and not half so good-looking."

"Oh, I do hate cold weather!" she continued combatively from the satin depths of her armchair. "I hate Winter; I hate Christmas; I hate people who are poor and dirty and depressing; and I hate growing old! Now, no compliments, Peter! If I weren't already in my dotage I wouldn't have done what I did this afternoon, and under the very eaves of the Aid Society, too! I suppose all this silly twaddle about the holiday-spirit has corrupted me, and made me listen to the creature's story, instead of sending him about his business as he deserved."

"If you've been giving money to some street-beggar, I must plead guilty to the same offence," interposed Mr. Perkins with accommodating gallantry. "As treasurer of our society, and pledged to discourage indiscriminate almsgiving, I'll absolve you from sin, Miss Kenworthey, if, as president of the same organization, you'll pronounce my absolution in return. I really think, however, that our purse-strings loosen of their own accord just now, and, after all, my dear lady, Christmas comes but once a year."

"We're living proof of that fact," she retorted grimly. "Once every twelve months is often enough to nearly kill me, as it is! But then," she added more complacently, "I'm a Delaware woman first and foremost, and a charities' president afterward. When he spoke of the old farm-house where he was raised, it seemed to carry me back to the days when I used to visit my grandfather in Sussex County, and make myself sick eating cling-stone peaches out in the barn."

"Ah, but in that case our plea before the bar of our society will be the same," commented Mr. Perkins genially. "Only fancy, my dear Hendricks, my beggar-chap struck me for a dollar on the very same grounds: that he'd run away from

a Delaware farm, and wanted to get back to the old people in time to hang up his Christmas stocking."

"Good gracious! You don't suppose it was the same one, do you?" exclaimed Miss Kenworthey. "My man was about forty, terribly shabby and shivery, and yet rather decent looking."

"So was mine. But mine ran away from home twenty years ago," proclaimed Mr. Perkins, in the chanting voice of a leader in a Greek chorus.

"Mine had done exactly the same thing," echoed Miss Kenworthey, with the effect of completing the measure by a carefully rehearsed antistrophe.

"From a little old Delaware farmhouse—"

"With a red gabled end," interpolated his hostess excitedly.

"And a well-sweep back in the yard, and—"

"A dozen raggedy acres of corn," shrieked the president to her agitated secretary.

"And an old sorrel—"

"Horse that was named after him! Good Heavens! Was there ever anything so outrageous? I'm thankful I only gave the wretch fifteen cents for car-fare!"

"Stung! By the shade of Ananias!" groaned Mr. Perkins, sinking back in his chair. "They're all alike, Miss Kenworthey: we only got what we deserved. I'll never again believe one under oath. They're all miserable, lying, worthless—"

"If you don't want me to strangle you, you'll change the subject," said Hendricks in a tense undertone. "Can't you see what you are doing, you ass?"

"What!" exclaimed the astonished moralist, following the direction of the young man's gaze which was fixed in anxious scrutiny on the girl behind the tea-tray.

But as he spoke, Gabrielle Du Bois—every vestige of color fled from her lips and cheeks—rose slowly to her feet, and stood before them swaying like a flower on its stalk, her hands pressed to her breast as if to still its rapid rise and fall; her eyes dilated with a growing fear.

"Aunt Augusta," she cried breathless-

ly, "do you mean it—it wasn't true what he told you? Do you mean that he—lied?"

"Lied?" retorted Miss Kenworthey tartly. "Of course he did. Of course they all do, rich and poor alike, for that matter—Why what ails the child?" she ejaculated in amazement; for with a little despairing cry the Dearest Girl had turned toward Bruce Hendricks, with outstretched arms and pitifully quivering lips.

"It isn't true, is it?" she gasped. "Oh, it isn't true what she and the sisters always said? That everyone in the world is false and wicked and deceitful? Oh, I thought I had begun to understand Life because I was a woman, and I was going to be *so* happy doing good! Please say it isn't *ever* true, or I think my heart will break!"

With one stride Hendricks was beside her, and as he threw his arms about her swaying form, she turned and clung to him appealingly, burying her pathetic, tear-stained face upon his shoulder.

"No, it isn't true!" he answered tenderly, stroking the bowed head with gentle, unsteady hand, while his voice rang with a note of joyous triumph. "It's a lovely, glorious world, my darling! A world to be happy in all the rest of our lives. A world just made for you and me to live in together, sweetheart! To live in together; always, always *together!*"

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed the petrified Mr. Perkins, "I supposed—"

"Gabrielle Du Bois!" shrieked Miss Kenworthey, suddenly regaining powers of speech and motion as she rose ponderously to her feet. "Come here this instant! What do you mean by such scandalous conduct? Bruce Hendricks, how dare you stand laughing at me as if you enjoyed that simpleton's hysterics? I'm ashamed of you both—before Mr. Perkins, too! You're a pretty fellow to take advantage of a girl just out of a convent—a baby who ought to be back in the nursery with her dolls!"

But before the object of her wrath could attempt to defend himself, the Dearest Girl, still within the protecting circle of his arms, launched her defiance of authority and convention.



"I don't want no clothes, I tell you"

"You needn't scold, Aunt Augusta," she said in her clear child's voice that wavered unsteadily between tears and laughter, as her hands stole upward and clasped themselves about Hendricks' neck. "I don't care one little bit about you, or Mr. Perkins either! You can call in Porson, and Marie, and all the other servants if you want to—for I've been in love with Bruce for three long, dreadful, everlasting weeks; and now that I'm sure he loves me, too, I don't care if all the world sees us here like this, and knows it!"

It was natural that Bruce Hendricks should wear a Spring overcoat the next morning; for when one's sun has entered the constellation of The Virgin, clear skies preclude all thought of Winter's angry tyranny. It was also natural that Wall Street should seem transformed into an Arcadian lane, through which shepherds led their flocks to pasture on ever-verdant slopes, or watered them beside murmuring brooks that rippled laz-

ily seaward over shifting golden sands. With a start Hendricks at last roused himself from his day-dreams, and stared about him like a man suddenly awakened from sleep, for he found himself in an unfamiliar quarter, and practically lost in a dirty, sordid street, whose crowded shops overflowed in indiscriminate confusion upon the sidewalks, in a medley of eatables, wearables, and movables that appealed neither to the sense of taste, nor sight, nor smell.

As he turned to retrace his steps to the office whither his errant feet should have led him a full half hour before, his eye caught sight of a shabby figure standing near a shop-window, through whose dingy glass peered certain ghastly dummies, illustrating, in various unlikeness poses, how the fashionable world does not array itself in the garb of civilization. There was something so familiar about the man's appearance that, in spite of the strangeness of his environment, Hendricks felt a momentary illusion of having been there in some previous state of

existence; but as the other turned toward him he recognized, with a start of annoyance, the hero of last evening's *Comedy of Errors*, as poor, as frost-bitten, as forlornly decent as on the occasion of their first meeting some eighteen hours before.

There was no trace of recollection of that event in the man's eyes, however, as he approached him; only the eager question of the professional mendicant baiting his hook to suit his victim's taste before he risks the throw that lands, or loses him, his prey. It was an impulse as fantastic as the day-dreams from which he had been roused that prompted Hendricks to lay his hand on the shoulder of the would-be fisherman, and propelling him gently toward the door of the Sartorial Emporium near which they found themselves, deliver him into the eager clutches of the proprietor.

"What you giving us?" demanded the Delaware exile in aggrieved remonstrance, as the expert fingers of his captor tore from his head a wilted felt apology for a hat, and from his back the aerated garment that did duty as a coat.

"I don't want no clothes, I tell you!" he shouted, struggling to retain possession of his vest, which promptly divided itself, Solomon-wise, between the contestants, leaving its late owner stripped to the heavy sweater that encased him in its cold—impervious meshes. But at a word of command from Hendricks the process of denudation was reversed, and, held fast in the grasp of an athletic assistant, shaken, lifted from his feet, thrown against the counter by the now frenzied proprietor, the companion of the sorrel horse found himself thrust into a gorgeous waistcoat whose colors shrieked for vengeance on their combiner; pinioned in a coat which resembled a straight-jacket; lost in the depths of an ulster that looked like a caricature from a comic paper; and extinguished under a derby-hat which was battered down over his eyes with a final exultant thump by the perspiring artist, who fell back exhausted to view the triumph of his labors on behalf of the wandering prodigal.

"What you giving us?" again demand-

ed the almost weeping heir to the dozen raggedy acres of corn-land, as he stooped to recover the remnants of his vest from the floor. "I didn't ask for no clothes! I aint asked nobody for nothing, you—"

"It's your first omission in twenty-four hours, then," retorted Hendricks dryly. "But you've got all that's coming to you now. Pay up, and clear out, or I'll call in a policeman to interview you, and see if you can't spend your Christmas somewhere else than in your native state of Delaware!"

At the first sound of his voice, however, the prodigal had torn away the derby from his head and stood staring at him with eyes in which anger and humor struggled for mastery, while a sheepishly deprecating grin overspread his face.

"So it's you, is it?" he said wonderingly. "You're mighty smart, aint you, to get me fixed good and plenty, and spoil my business? They'll think I'm a suffering angel, wont they, when they see me rigged out in these nigger-minstrel togs? Say," he went on, edging nearer to his accuser, while the smile vanished from his pinched features, "what are you so sore about anyhow? What's a dollar to you that you want to run me in? What harm did I ever do you, that you want to get me pulled?"

Harm! Hendricks drew a deep breath. Again the clear voice of the Dearest Girl rang out in pitiful appeal; again he felt her clinging arms about his neck, and the weight of her precious head upon his shoulder.

"I guess I'm it," said Hendricks laughing as he handed a yellow bill to the ecstatic proprietor. "There'll be some change coming to you that you can keep, my friend. But I want you to alter that ingenious tale of yours before it grows gray in the service, and breaks down from overwork."

"I'll fix it, governor," a jubilant voice shouted after him as he turned smiling toward the street, the vision of the Dearest Girl once more rising before him. "I'll move the farm house to South Carolina, all right, all right; and change the color of the gable-end; and dye the old horse black!"



Parisian Fashion Model XVII D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

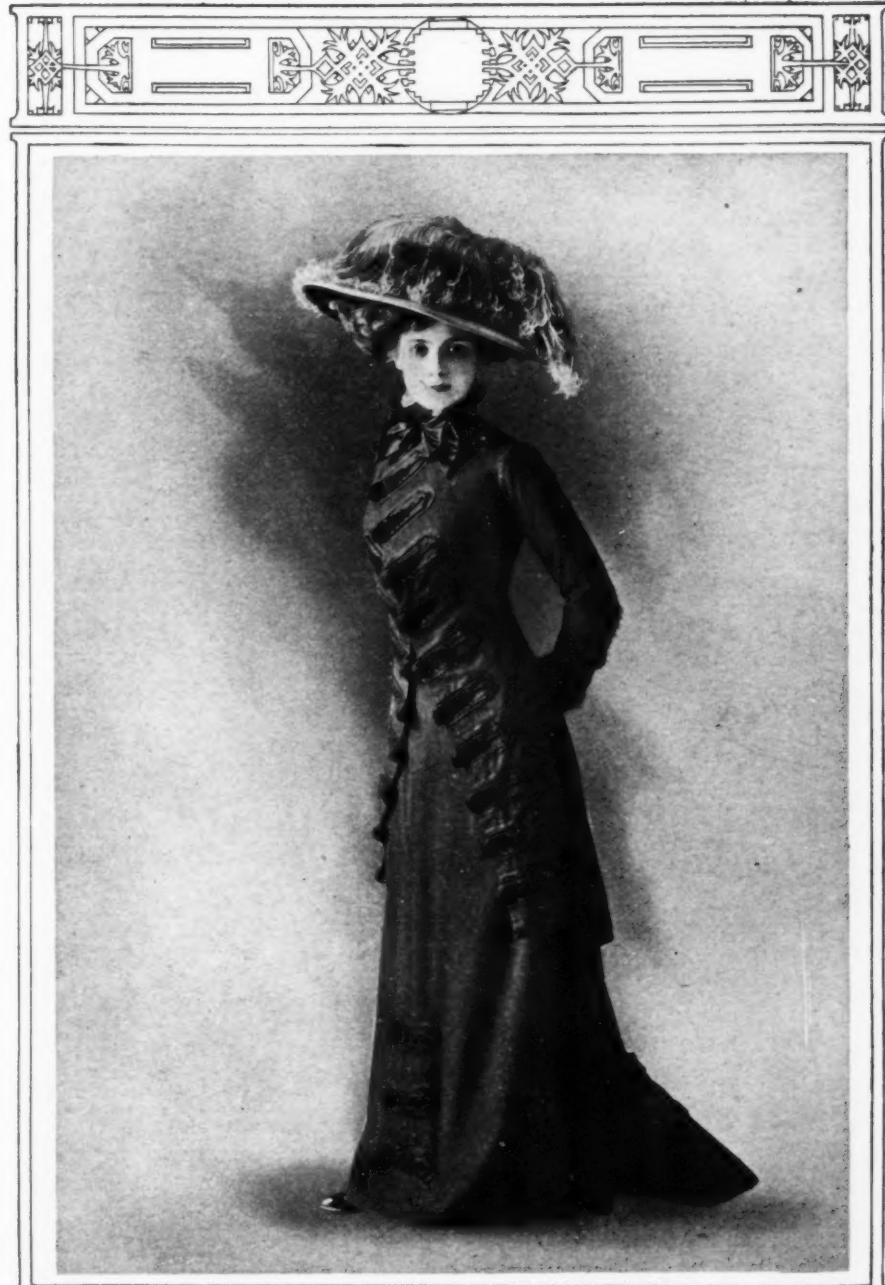
Maison Bernard.—Marten coat with wide fox
collar, lined with embroidered satin.



Parisian Fashion Model XVIII D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Dukes *et* Joire:—Skirt of maroon velvet; coat of same shade cloth trimmed with soutache.



Parisian Fashion Model XIX D—From Life

By special contract with Maison Bernard:—Wide striped serge suit
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Parisian Fashion Model XX D—From Life

By special contract with Maison Rouff;—Evening gown of rose tulle
REUTLINGER, PARIS trimmed with jet pearl embroidery.



Parisian Fashion Model XXI D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Beer:—Evening gown of tulle and vel-
vet embroidered in gold.



Parisian Fashion Model XXII D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Drécoll:—Long coat of marten with
muff of the same fur.



Parisian Fashion Model XXIII D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Drécoll:—Costume of champagne
shade trimmed with gold lace and embroidery.



Parisian Fashion Model XXIV D—From Life

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Bernard:—Evening coat of ermine
with black marten collar and cuffs.



Photograph by
White, New York.

Louis Mann as *John Krauss* and Corinne Mâverne as *Emma* in "The Man Who Stood Still"

SOME DRAMAS OF THE DAY *by* Louis V. De Foe

FOR three or four years past the European cables have been busy with the name and literary exploits of M. Henri Bernstein. Here is a dramatist whom Parisian critics have persistently treated with cool reserve, but whom Parisian theatergoers have as persistently acclaimed the inevitable successor of that famous master of the plot dramatic, M. Victorien Sardou. And now that Sardou is dead, the name of Bernstein assumes a new significance and a fresh importance. We in this country have had only slight opportunities to form a just estimate of his work. One reason is that the viewpoint regarding life from which he writes differs so materially from our own. Another reason is that our stand-

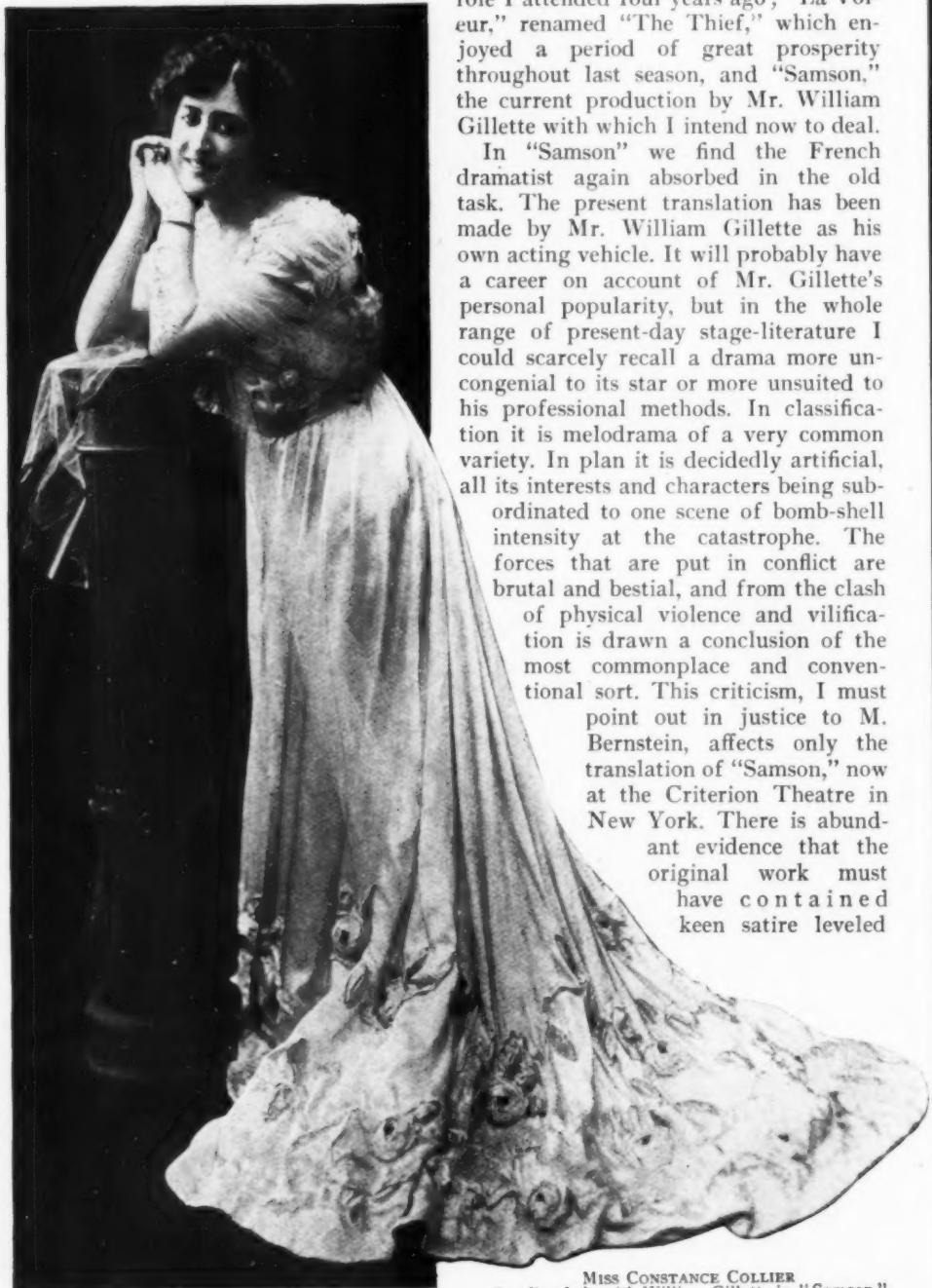
ards of what is seemly and in good taste in the playhouse do not accord with those of the French. In their efforts to modify M. Bernstein's plays, in order to adjust them to our more rigid code, his American translators and adaptors have contrived to deliver his works to us in cramped and imperfect form.

There is reason to believe that, as a dramatist, M. Bernstein is more formidable than he has appeared to be through the spectacles of the three plays which have had a hearing in English in New York. He is a young man of brilliant attainments and is passionately loyal to his art. He has been writing for the stage for nine years, and in that period has delivered nine plays, beginning with

"Le Marche" in 1901, and ending with "Israel," produced by Mme. Rejane with great *eclat* in Paris only a few weeks ago. Of these nine plays, the three that have

been acted in English are "Le Detour," translated under the title of "The Younger Mrs. Parling," whose speedy obsequies with Miss Annie Russell in the leading rôle I attended four years ago; "La Vol-eur," renamed "The Thief," which enjoyed a period of great prosperity throughout last season, and "Samson," the current production by Mr. William Gillette with which I intend now to deal.

In "Samson" we find the French dramatist again absorbed in the old task. The present translation has been made by Mr. William Gillette as his own acting vehicle. It will probably have a career on account of Mr. Gillette's personal popularity, but in the whole range of present-day stage-literature I could scarcely recall a drama more uncongenial to its star or more unsuited to his professional methods. In classification it is melodrama of a very common variety. In plan it is decidedly artificial, all its interests and characters being subordinated to one scene of bomb-shell intensity at the catastrophe. The forces that are put in conflict are brutal and bestial, and from the clash of physical violence and vilification is drawn a conclusion of the most commonplace and conventional sort. This criticism, I must point out in justice to M. Bernstein, affects only the translation of "Samson," now at the Criterion Theatre in New York. There is abundant evidence that the original work must have contained keen satire leveled



MISS CONSTANCE COLLIER
Leading lady with William Gillette in "Samson"

at a rotten but proud French aristocracy which sells its daughters to uncouth *parvenu* millionaires for its own profit and then condones the moral lapses that result from such transactions. There must surely have been in the original play a firm motive, lost in the Anglo-Saxon deodorizing process, to justify the strong climax. But even the original theme was probably quite as disagreeable in story and as depressing and demoralizing in influence as the translation.

Let me briefly sketch the plot. *Maurice Brachard*, the "Samson" of the story, has risen by might of his physical power, tenacity of purpose, and financial genius to a reigning place among Parisian millionaires. He is rough, unlettered, and coarse, but his wealth has dazzled the impecunious family of the *Marquis d'Anderline* and they have married their daughter, *Anne-Marie*, to him. She is miserable in her money-luxuries, an unloving, discontented wife. In her circle of acquaintances is *Jerome Le Govain*, a society-favorite but a contemptible *roué* who has grown rich by investing in *Brachard's* Egyptian copper-stocks. *Anne-Marie* becomes infatuated and, believing that in *Jerome* she sees the qualities which her husband lacks, conspires on a night when *Brachard* is planning to go to London, to spend the midnight hours in her admirer's company among the gay resorts of Paris.

This state of affairs becomes known to *Brachard* through *Le Govain's* jealous favorite. The millionaire postpones his trip and fairly traps his wife at three in the morning as she returns to her boudoir, disheveled, bedraggled, and disgusted to the depths of her soul by the depravity she has witnessed. Her eva-



Photograph by White, New York.

Miss Aimee Ehrlich, the *Princess* in "Little Nemo"

sions and excuses cannot thwart *Brachard's* stern, investigating questions or her contrition mollify his awful wrath. One word after another reveals to him the identity of her companion and his terrible revenge is quickly planned.

Brachard will not challenge *Le Govain* to a duel for he knows that the *roué* is the most skillful swordsman in Paris. His commercial turn of mind suggests another and better satisfaction. He will rob his rival of his last penny and kick him, a pauper, into the street, even though it also sweeps away his own colossal fortune. This project can be accomplished by knocking the bottom out of the copper-market, causing a fall of two hundred points in the securities which *Le Govain* holds on margin. The enraged millionaire, whose brutal, early instincts are suddenly revived, works like

lightning and by noon of the next day his plan for revenge is complete.

Engaging a private suite in the Hotel Ritz he invites the unsuspecting *Le Govain* to luncheon and entertains him hospitably while his agents on the Bourse are doing their work of destruction. Soon reports arrive that copper-stock is falling. The newsboys take up the panic cry. The time is now ripe for *Brachard's* exultation and he turns upon his bewildered victim in maniacal glee. At first *Le Govain* will not believe. Then the street-cries make known the truth. In the ensuing struggle between the two men *Brachard's* coarse nature finds vent in curses and physical violence. He sneers at *Le Govain's* talk of honor and challenge, and tears at his throat like a wolf. His massive strength makes the other powerless in his grasp, and he holds the cad, whimpering, gasping, and cursing, across a table until the din in the street makes certain to both that they are both financially ruined. Thereupon the giant kicks his puny rival out of the door.

In the final act *Brachard*, penniless and ambitionless, and now in danger of arrest for the general ruin he has caused, again meets his wife. *Anne-Marie*, at first horrified, learns that the wholesale havoc he has wrought has been in revenge for her faithlessness. The husband she could not love for his money she now admires for his iron will. She tells him so in an emotional scene and they are reconciled. Here, surely is a weak *dénouement* on the heels of a climax so frightful.

As for the acting, the drama, such as it is, loses half its savage intensity through Mr. Gillette's lack of adaptability to the part of *Brachard*. The hero is a physical giant. Mr. Gillette, on the other hand, is slight and physically weak. The hero must be a medium of intense dramatic expression. Mr. Gillette's forte is repression. The keynote of the whole play is animal emotionalism. Mr. Gillette excels in intellectual taciturnity. So the actor is unfitted for his task at almost every point. He undoubtedly grasps the rôle intellectually, but he fails at every crucial moment to transmit its force to the audience. Better acting is shown by

Mr. Arthur Byron who, in the rôle of *Le Govain*, is the foil of the star. Indeed, *Brachard* would probably have been better acted by Mr. Frederic de Belleville, who is relegated to the part of a comedy *Marquis*. Miss Constance Collier, as *Anne-Marie*, does creditable work in a narrow range of emotions. She is a new actress from England, a brunette with features moulded for tragedy. Miss Marie Wainwright appears to advantage as the heroine's impecunious mother. But the freshest, most spontaneous impersonation among the women is that by Miss Pauline Frederick as the jealous demimondaine, a part lost sight of early in the translation, but which, I fancy, is brought strongly into account in the *dénouement* of the original version.

IN marked contrast to the extravagant theatricalism and generally demoralizing atmosphere of "Samson" is the fine naturalism and healthy moral influence of "El Grañ Galeoto," the masterpiece of the Spanish dramatic genius, Jose Echegaray, which Mr. Charles Frederic Nirdlinger has translated for the first time into appropriate English under the title of "The World and His Wife." In many respects I consider this play the most significant and powerful of the present dramatic season. The score of novelty alone denies it precedence over the rest, for it was performed in a faulty and generally unsatisfactory version in New York ten years ago by Miss Mary Shaw and her cohorts in a long since defunct Independent Theatre movement.

At least this production has given Mr. William Faversham an artistic standing which he has never before enjoyed in New York. For its performance he has assembled an effective and well balanced organization which he hopes to make the nucleus of a future stock-company that will be such in fact as well as in name. He has shown his colleagues in the theatrical profession how they may free themselves from the janitor domination of the present system of stage management. Thus, besides furnishing New York with an unexpected artistic treat, he has conferred a great boon on the stage.



Photograph by Moffett Studio, Chicago.

MISS FRITZI SCHEFF

Miss Scheff is now appearing in a new opera, "The Prima Donna"



Photograph by Brady, New York.
MISS CONSUELO BAILEY

In spite of the period which has elapsed since Echegaray wrote it, "El Grañ Galeoto" still has a lively interest and immediate application. The topics open to treatment on the stage are not so limited as is generally supposed. Other circumstances than marital infidelity lie at the bottom of the painful tragedies of life. One of the chief sources of disruption and domestic disaster is indiscriminate and baseless tattle, a weakness ever prevalent among all peoples. Calumny, somehow, is easier to bestow than praise, and slander travels faster and is longer remembered than approbation.

The tragic effect of such unjust defamation on the lives of three worthy and innocent persons in the gossipy diplomatic circle of Madrid is the simple

theme of Echegaray's play. Its powerfully concentrated story lays bare the bruised hearts and distracted minds of its characters and culminates in a catastrophe of relentlessly logical and remarkably dramatic intensity. It is the story of "Othello" applied to modern life, yet it borrows nothing from the Shakespearean tragedy; it is the torture of Dante's "Paolo and Francesca" over again, yet with a happier *dénouement*.

In the home of his friend and patron, *Don Julian*, and the latter's noble and affectionate wife, *Doña Teodora*, lives *Don Ernesto*, an attractive youth who is esteemed by both as a brother. He, on his side, is bound to them by ties of gratitude. But his position is misjudged by the scandal-mongers of the Prado and cafés. An *Iago* enters the household in the form of *Julian's* brother, *Don Severo* a man of venomous nature and intense pride of family. He industriously pours the scandalous tattle of the boulevards into *Don*

Julian's ear. At first the husband scorns the insinuations, but soon seeds of suspicion began to take root in his mind. Then in his jealous eyes every innocent action of his devoted wife assumes a guilty significance and the open, frank manner of *Don Ernesto* is distorted into suspicious intent.

Under such distressing circumstances *Don Ernesto* resolves to leave the home of his benefactors forever. But before he can depart from Madrid an insult, openly offered to *Doña Teodora* in a café by one of her defamers, goads him to a challenge. *Don Julian* hears of the duel and claims the right to defend his wife's honor. He is mortally wounded in the fight which ensues, though subsequently *Don Ernesto* kills the man.

But the mischief, already begun, continues. The presence of *Doña Teodora* in *Don Ernesto's* rooms, where she has flown, frantic with anxiety for her husband's safety, only confirms her guilt to *Don Julian's* frenzied mind and he dies with a last bitter imprecation on her innocent head. His brother takes up the persecution and, under the Spanish law, drives the tortured woman from the house. Not until then is the noble loyalty of *Don Ernesto* fanned to a flame of passion and he takes *Doña Teodora* to his breast, vowing that he will be her lover and protector forever and that together they will face the world.

The firm logic of the *dénouement* is plain. So, too, is the passion of unfounded jealousy which obsesses *Don Julian*, an easily understandable weakness of human nature. Down to its slightest detail the drama is ingeniously and powerfully contrived. Character is developed under the clash of circumstances, situations progress in growing intensity one from another, and when the catastrophe is reached it is as thrilling as it is pitifully true.

Rarely is a more even performance given by a better balanced cast. Mr. Faversham, as *Don Ernesto*, deserves special commendation, for he acts with less monotony and greater freedom from mannerisms than before, and his repression in the opening scene is crowned by a remarkable burst of passion at the close. If he occasionally lacks distinction and elegance of manner there is no fault to be found with his sincerity. Miss Julie Opp is scarcely fitted for any rôle which demands deep emotional expression, but her performance of *Doña Teodora* is a painstaking effort. Of fine



Photograph by Brady, New York.

MISS LAURA HOPE CREWS

distinction is Mr. H. Cooper Cliffe's *Don Julian*; and Mr. Charles Harbury, Miss Olive Oliver, Mr. Morton Selton and Mr. Harry Redding are admirable in the remaining rôles.

Indeed, I can recommend a visit to "The World and His Wife" with more enthusiasm than to any other drama now current in New York.

FOR Mr. Louis Mann Thespis will wear none but a smiling mask. By temperament and experience he is a comedian, and in humorous characters cast in eccentric mould and touched with pathos he is uniformly proficient. But his ardent wish to be recognized as a serious actor amounts almost to an obsession. His confidence in himself is as firm as his am-

bition is great and they combine to cloud his vision as an artist.

Mr. Mann is once more the victim of his ruling passion. His new character of *John Krauss*, the old Swiss watchmaker of the Bowery, kindly, generous, industrious, but steeped in Old World prejudice, bigotry, and narrowness, in Mr. Jules Eckert Goodman's comedy, "The Man Who Stood Still," has some of the outlines but none of the depth or substance of Mr. David Warfield's *Von Barnwig*, which undoubtedly inspired it. Its effect is to excite laughter rather than to compel tears. As an eccentric type, sketched in the style of caricature, it has many points of interest, but it does not penetrate those tender places where sympathy dwells. It is merely the work of a skilled actor who does not feel deeply or, at least, cannot express spontaneously the depth of his feeling.

The play is exactly what its title implies—the story of a man whom the march of progress has left behind. Old *John Krauss*, centered in his family ideals of the past and absorbed in his dusty stock of watches of ancient make, refuses to listen to the new generation knocking at his door. He scorns new methods of competition in business. The cronies of his youth are good enough for him in his old age. So, fettered by his narrow views and rigid prejudices, his little business gradually slips away from him, his home is destroyed, and he is left in poverty and alone.

From this short sketch it would seem that "The Man Who Stood Still" contains some of the elements of an appealing story. It is, indeed, the composition of a writer who, though young, has studied life seriously. But Mr. Goodman still lacks the technical proficiency to express himself clearly through his characters. His drama at intervals has the ring of truth. Again it drifts into melodramatic extravagances of the shallowest and tritest sort. Pictures are built that quicken the imagination, only to destroy it the next instant. The play is an uneven and unsatisfactory entertainment, one of the most curious mixtures of the good and the bad that the stage this season has produced.

Old *Krauss* nurses a secret ambition that his daughter, *Marie*, shall marry *Fred*, the son of *Edward Spiegel*, his old companion on the Bowery. But he does not realize that the girl has grown into womanhood and is able to choose for herself. She becomes infatuated with the scapegrace son of the old watchmaker's successful business-rival and their meetings, held in secret, result in her betrayal and disgrace. The discovery of her plight is made at a dinner given to celebrate her birthday and to bring about her betrothal. At the disclosure the old man's heart congeals and with bitter reproaches he drives her from his house.

During the four years which ensue *Marie*, unknown to her father, has found shelter at the *Spiegels*, rearing her child and supporting herself by needlework. Then comes a night when the honest German family decides that the time is ripe for a reconciliation, and a meeting is arranged between the father and his daughter. But, alas, the tenderness of this climax is turned to roaring farce by Mr. Mann's acting. The pinochle game which ends in a quarrel between the old Swiss and his German friend is as funny as the billiard-game in which Weber & Fields indulged with convulsing effect in the old days, but the well intended pathos of the *dénouement* goes entirely astray.

Despite the fact that young *Spiegel*, whom *Marie* refused, is still willing to marry her, old *Krauss* stubbornly persists in regarding the girl as a contaminated being and leaves his old friend's home in a rage. In the end, an impulse of love which he cannot suppress asserts itself for his illegitimate grandchild, and the final curtain finds him seated on the floor playing with the tot—the new generation, in the grief and loneliness of his old age, at last gaining entrance into his heart.

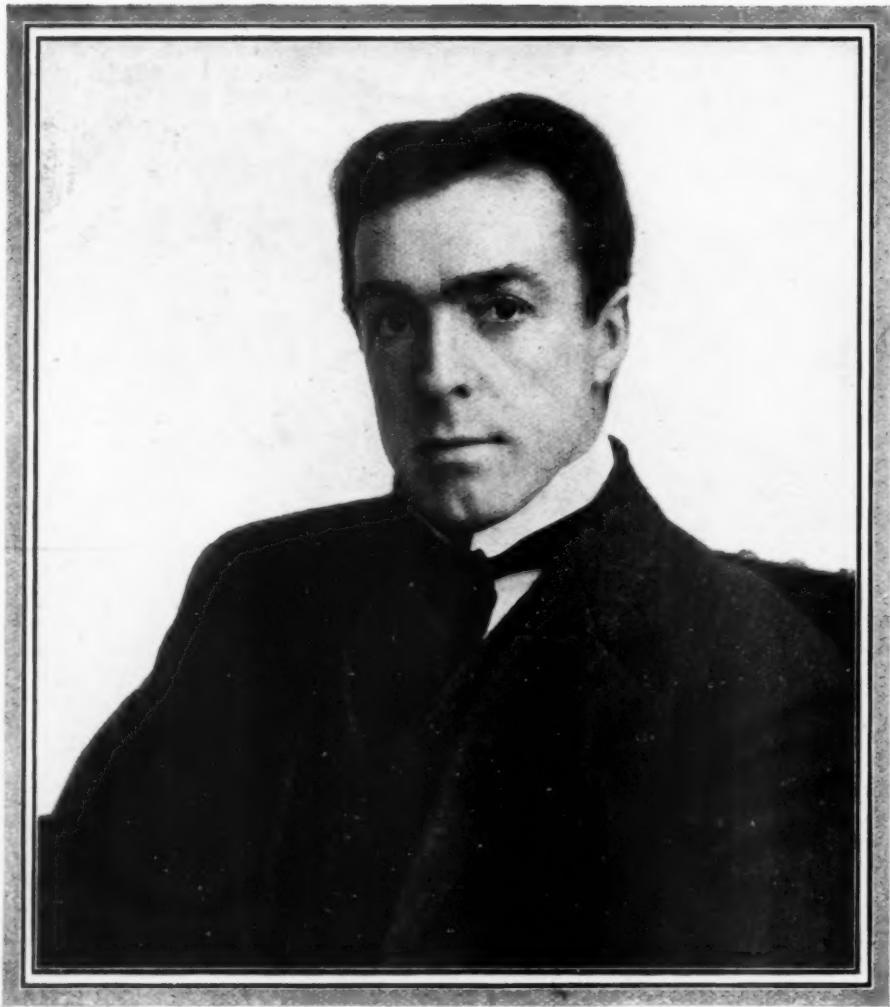
Mr. William A. Brady, whose confidence in Mr. Mann's serious dramatic ability is strong, has staged "The Man Who Stood Still" with much realism, but his production has the appearance of being labored and overdone. Some of the incidents that have been arranged with the greatest care have only slight relation to the central interests, just as some



Photograph by White, New York.

MR. LOUIS MANN

In the character of *John Krauss*, in Jules Eckert Goodman's play, "The Man Who Stood Still"



Photograph by Sarony, New York.

MR. WILLIAM FAVERSHAM

Appearing in "The World and His Wife" and "The Barber of New Orleans"

of the characters which Mr. Goodman has developed with the greatest truth, have only a distant bearing on the main theme.

As for the acting, it is as uneven as the play itself. Perhaps Mr. Robert A. Fischer, who has the rôle of *Edward Spiegel*, approaches closer to human nature than Mr. Mann as *Krauss*. At any rate his impersonation is thoroughly consistent. The best character of all, that of an ambitious youth in whose mouth the dramatist has put some of his most

eloquent lines, is admirably acted by Mr. Geoffrey Stein, but it is lost in the shuffle of extraneous incident.

THE prolific inventive genius of Mr. Frederic Thompson, the Luna Park showman and first manager of the Hippodrome has given New York, in "Via Wireless," a new melodramatic thrill. In view of the exciting effect of its transparent realism, even upon sophisticated metropolitan audiences, it is gratuitous, perhaps, to insist that the piece is a lin-



Photograph by Sarony, New York.

MISS JULIE OPP

Leading lady with Mr. William Faversham in his new plays

eal descendant of "Blue Jeans," an offspring of the buzz-saw plays of other days, in which dramatic or any other art has not the slightest part. But it must be conceded that its mechanical scenes are arranged with marvelous cunning and that they go a long way toward creating an illusion.

The mere detail of the story I may as well omit, except to say that it deals with the efforts of a scoundrel and his weak tool to discredit a gun of immense power invented by a naval officer. Two scenes

of exposition, which ventilate the machinations of the villain, lead to a third which represents the furnace-room of a Pittsburg steel-plant, in which the giant piece of ordnance is being manufactured. The plan of the miscreant manager and his confederates is to destroy the temper of the gun by leaving it too long in its oil-bath.

This scene, with its imitation of massive machinery, its effect of stifling heat and the pandemonium of noise and excitement which accompanies the accom-

plishment of a herculean task in industrial science, is a really graphic display. The picture is animate with grimy giants dripping with sweat, ear-splitting with the din of hammers and throbbing with the grind of wheels. You may get the same sensation any day by stopping at the door of a great factory, but, somehow, such prosaic scenes of industry gather a new interest when shown in cardboard imitation on the stage.

The white-hot gun is lifted from the fire on a traveling crane and plunged, seething, into the oil caldron. A drunken foreman knocks down the inventor and in some unreasonable way the heroine, who is present, is compromised. What would mechanical melodrama be without a compromised heroine?

But this display is only the forerunner to a greater and far better sensation. The next scene shows the wireless-room of a reeling, plunging, storm-driven liner in mid-ocean. The rocking ship, with the tumbling waves, lightning scarred clouds and howling winds, is enough in itself to make the audience feel seasick. Suddenly the wireless instrument begins to snarl and snap and emit tongues of blue flame. Then it tells the story of shipwreck and disaster. You instantly forget the picture before your eyes as your imagination builds the spectacle of what is happening off in the void, twenty miles across the storm-tossed sea.

The yacht, *Irvessa*, with the hero, heroine, villain—in fact, all the leading personages of the play—aboard, has been wrecked on a reef while *en route* from Porto Rico to New York. She is fast breaking up and all, except the courageous young naval officer, have taken to the boats. He has remained aboard at the wireless-instrument, to send out across the sea chance calls for aid. His frantic appeals reach the zone of the other ship and it dashes onward to the work of rescue. Presently the wireless communications cease and you believe that the yacht is the prey of the tempest, but once again the messages flash out.

One after another the boats and their occupants are picked up. Then a light is seen through the storm and the swaying spars of the yacht come into view. A

boat is lowered and finally the hero of the situation is lifted, dripping and exhausted, aboard the big ship. It requires half an hour to enact the scene of the wireless rescue. The highest praise which can be said for it is that not once does it relax its grip on the interest of the audience.

It may be added that the villain is successful in his dastardly work. The gun, rendered defective in the making, explodes, killing several people. But a court-martial discloses the conspiracy and poetic justice is meted out to evil while the hero gets his vindication and reward.

Effective acting hides some of the extravagances of the story, in the writing of which Mr. Paul Armstrong, Mr. Winchell Smith, Mr. Edwin Balmer, and Mr. I. W. Edwards all have a share. The villain and his tool are Mr. J. E. Miltern and Mr. William B. Mack; the hero and his ladylove are Mr. Edwin Arden and Miss Vera McCord, and Mr. Robert McWade, as an ironmaster, adds a touch of actualism by appearing as a recognizable imitation of Mr. Andrew Carnegie. But I most admire the fine performance of Mr. Frank Monroe who gives an admirable impersonation of a keen, resourceful United States secret-service officer.

THREE is scarcely a child in the land, and surely not one in New York, who cannot boast a speaking or at least a bowing acquaintance with *Little Nemo*, the good little boy whom Mr. Winsor McCay puts to sleep every Sunday morning in the colored supplements where he meets with the weird adventures that are possible only to travelers who wander through the iridescent kingdoms of Slumberland. And every one of the children, together with most of their elders, will be glad to know that the sphere of *Little Nemo's* activities has been enlarged and that he has been hocus-pocused out of paper and ink and into the live and doughty hero of a great, glittering dream-play.

It needed plenty of magicians to transform *Little Nemo* into a really tangible creature of flesh and blood. Klaw & Erlanger created the world of tinsel in



Photograph by White, New York.

MR. ARNOLD DALY
As Mayor Patrick Sarsfield Desmond in "His Wife's Family"

which he was brought to life, and beautiful are the stage-pictures they have unfolded in the new extravaganza. Mr. Harry B. Smith invented the adventures through which the little hero passes, and in some of them he shows a pretty fancy. But the greatest magician of all is Mr. Victor Herbert. His music endows *Little Nemo* with a child-soul and weaves about him an imaginative web spun from the golden threads of melody.

While these are the arch-conspirators in the metamorphosis of *Little Nemo*, it requires fully two hundred others to fill in the pictures and give them animation. Some are humans, some are fairies, some

are strange and awful animals that live in the jungles of Slumberland, and some, too, are birds.

So many strange happenings are crowded between the rise and the fall of the curtain that it is impossible to describe them in detail. But the general impression, after sitting for three hours under the spell of the play, is good. At the outset the *Little Princess* in the Kingdom of Slumberland pines for a playmate and the *Candy Kid* invokes *Little Nemo* out of the pages of a story-book. Then, with the *Little Princess*, *Dr. Pill*, *Flip* and the *Missionary* for companions, the wanderings of the little hero begin.

One of the prettiest of his dream-experiences is in the Land of Saint Valentine, which gives an excuse for a beautiful ballet. Thence he is off with his mischievous friends to the Weather Factory Office in Cloudland, where *Flip* turns on all sorts of weather at once and causes a series of wondrous scenic disturbances. Eventually he arrives, aboard the Ship of Dreams, at the Isle of Table d'Hote, where only his valor saves him from becoming the dinner of the *Cannibal King*. His dream about the Fourth of July furnishes the climax to the pictures. It is presented in the form of a patriotic ballet, in which all the heroes of the Nation pass before him in review to the popping of gorgeous fireworks and the clang of the Liberty Bell.

The Country of Dreams, one of the most delightful ballets of all, brings the spectacle to its close and winds up a production second only in the season's list to "The Ballet of the Birds" at the Hippodrome.

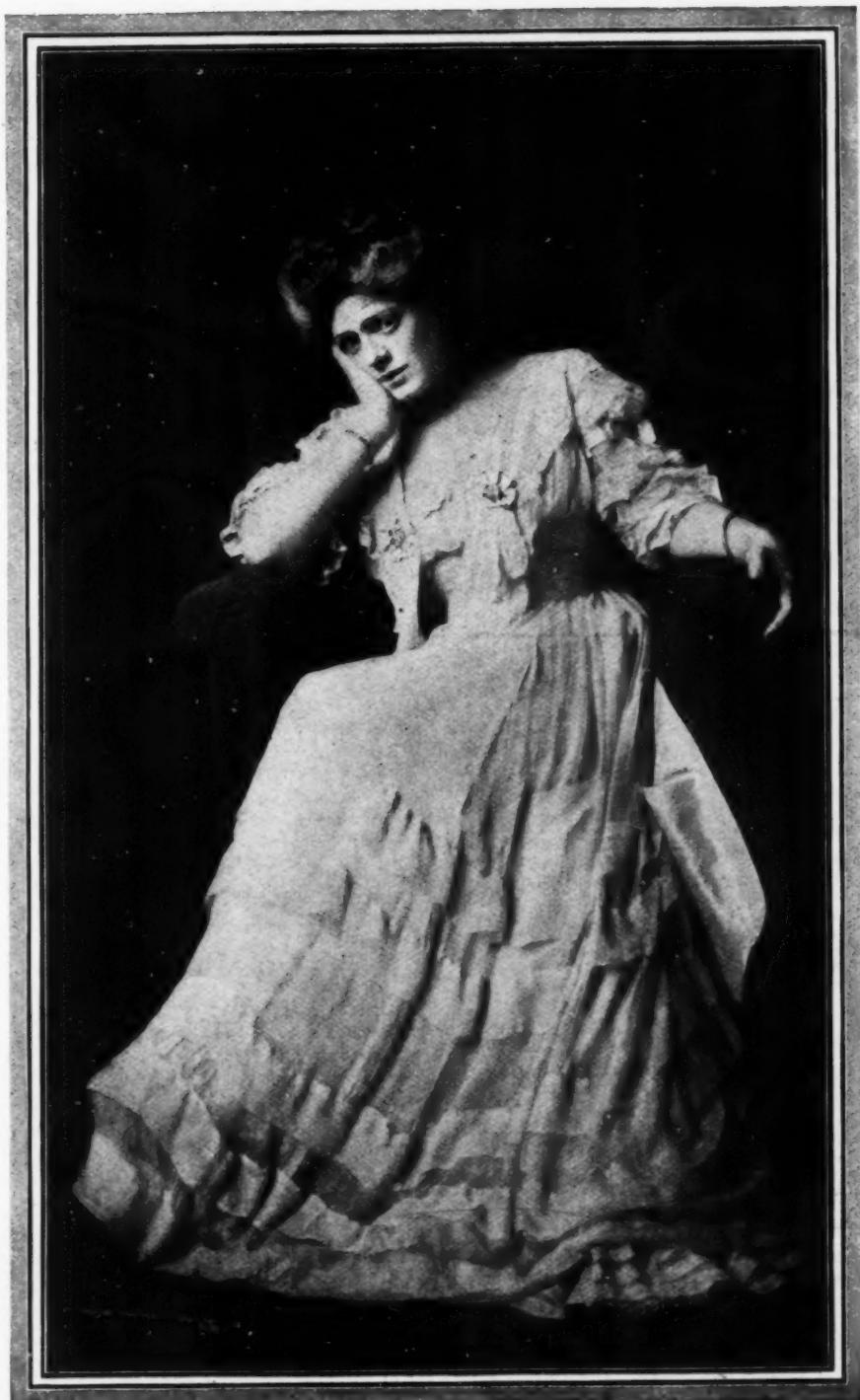
"Little Nemo," of course, will spend the greater part of the year in New York, and it is a welcome addition to the list of metropolitan entertainments. It is produced on a scale greater even than the famous Christmas pantomimes at the London Drury Lane, it is fresher than they in fancy, and it is also finer in texture. The greatest cause for regret is that Klaw & Erlanger could not have been content to keep it entirely within the limits of child-life. The obstreperous "comedians" do their best at intervals to bring it down to the level of knock-about

burlesque, but Mr. Herbert, the composer, is always successful in restoring it to its higher and better plane, notwithstanding that his score is not equal to the one he wrote for "Babes in Toyland."

Master Gabriel, a diminutive dwarf, impersonates *Little Nemo* and succeeds in making the character exceedingly childlike, in spite of the fact that he has voted for three Presidential candidates during his stage-career. Miss Aimee Ehrlich is the *Little Princess*, and she both sings and dances cleverly. The three "comedians" are Mr. Billy B. Van, Mr. Joseph Cawthorne, and Mr. Harry Kelly. Mr. Dave Abrams, long famous as an animal-actor, actually shines as *Gladys the Cat*, *Nutty the Squirrel* and *Teddy the Bear*. None of the others in the cast is important.

WHEN "Lady Frederick," the comedy which launched Mr. W. Somerset Maugham on the sunlit waves of success, was at the height of its London run, with the volatile and delightful Miss Ethel Irving in its title rôle, I reviewed it at length in my letters to THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE. It was then known that Miss Ethel Barrymore had been selected for its principal part in this country, and I ventured the prophecy that the demure, stately, and reserved American star would find difficulty in adjusting her temperamental qualities to Mr. Maugham's effervescent and devil-may-care but, withal, delightful Irish heroine.

Well, the months have rolled by and now Miss Barrymore is impersonating *Lady Frederick* in New York. I confess that her ideal of the character is not nearly so attractive as was Miss Irving's and I do not think that she succeeds in transmitting to her audiences the author's full intent. But leaving comparisons, which are always odious, out of the question, and judging Miss Barrymore's acting by independent standards, she gives a very engaging performance, the best, perhaps, she has offered in recent years, for the maturity of the part seems to have strengthened her poise and self-control. She is one of the most attractive exam-



Photograph Copyright 1906, by Frank Scott Clark, Detroit, Mich.

MISS ETHEL BARRYMORE

Miss Barrymore is now appearing in Somerset Maugham's Comedy, "Lady Frederick"



Photograph by Harris & Ewing, Washington.
MISS BLANCHE WALSH

ples of cultivated young womanhood on the stage. The only pity is that she so persistently neglects the art of elocution, which is now the one glaring imperfection in her work. The play will succeed here, partly through Miss Barrymore's efforts and partly on its own account. It is an artificial piece of dramatic writing, in which conventional situations abound, but its dialogue has a constant sparkle and continuous amusement is evolved from the dilemmas in which its characters are placed.

There is no need to sketch again the story of its plot. In the American production the characters are all compe-

tently acted. Miss Barrymore receives her best support from Mr. Bruce McRae, in his easy performance of *Paradine Fouldes*; Miss Jessie Millward as *Lady Mereston*, and Mr. Orlando Daly as the money-shark, *Captain Montgomerie*, a character which probably could not exist in real life but which gathers real interest as a stage-puppet.

In all his plays Mr. Maugham suggests the style of our own Mr. Clyde Fitch, and in "Lady Frederick" more than in any of the others. He is a prolific writer, and no doubt is at the threshold of a career which will yield great wealth, if not substantial fame.